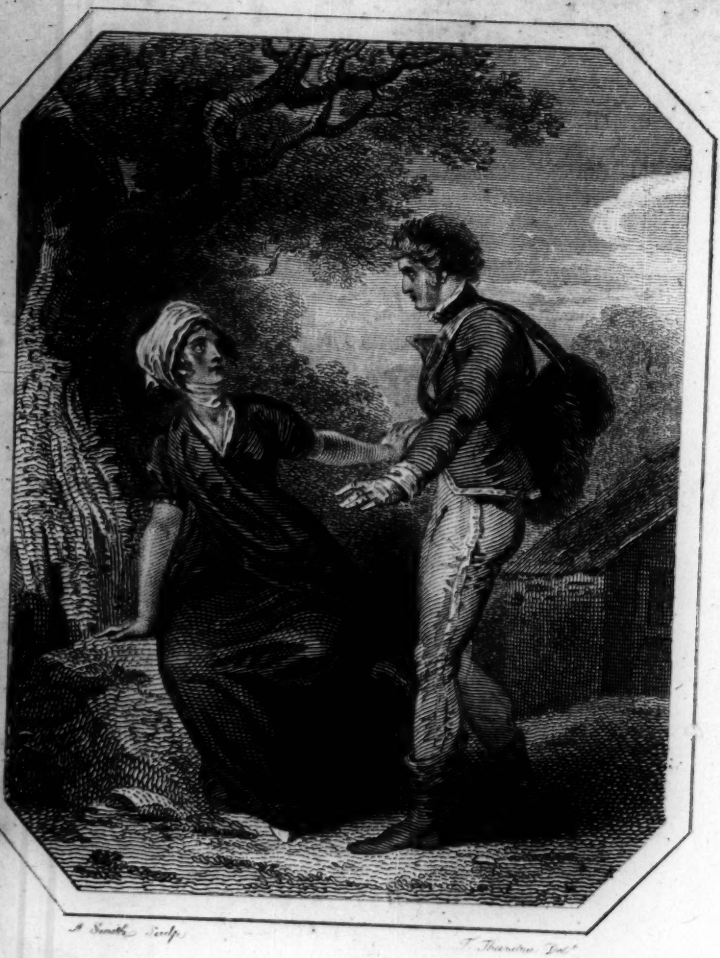

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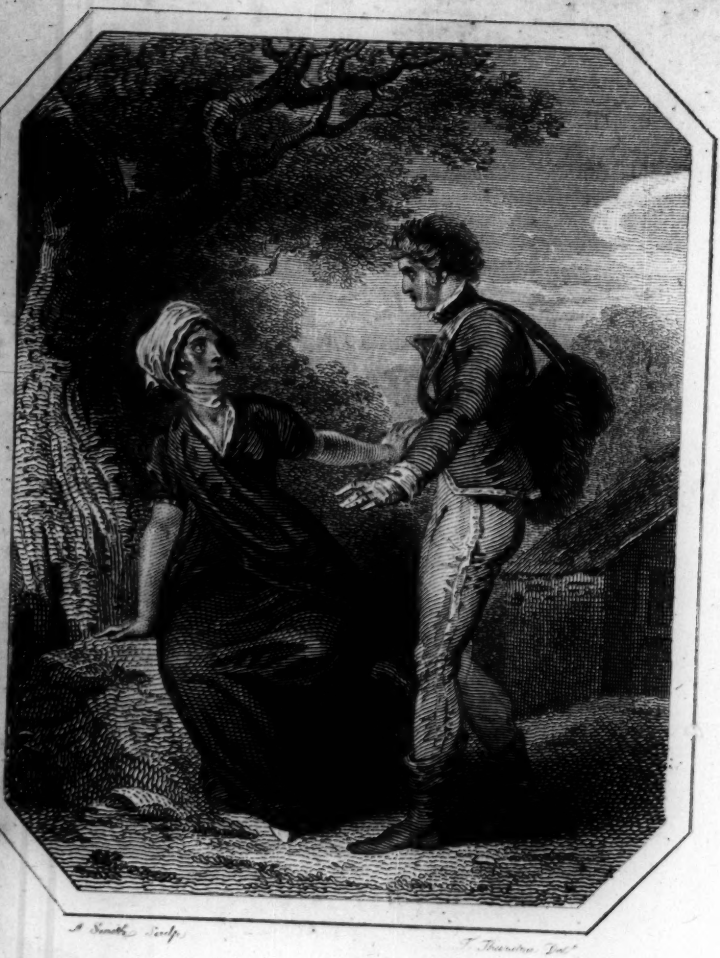
Lovers Vows.

Act I. Scene I.

Published March 1.1800 by Vernor & Hood, Poultry.



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Lovers Vows.

Act I. Scene I.

Published March 1.1800 by Vernor & Hood, Poultry.

LOVERS' VOWS;

OR,

THE NATURAL SON.

A

DRAMA,

IN FIVE ACTS.

Tranſlated from the German of

AUGUSTUS VON KOTZEBUE,

BY

Benjamin Thompson, Esq.

London:

Printed by T. Maiden, Sherbourn-Lane,

FOR VERNOR AND HOOD,

No. 31, POULTRY.

1800.

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Dramatis Personae.

BARON WILDENHAIN, *a Colonel out of Service.*
COUNT VON DER MULDE.
PASTOR *of the Parish in which the* Baron's *Estate lies.*
CHRISTIAN, *the* Baron's *Butler.*
FREDERICK, *a young Soldier.*
LANDLORD.
FARMER.
LABOURER.
JEW.
GAMEKEEPER.
COTTAGER.

AMELIA, *the* Baron's *Daughter.*
WILHELMINA.
COTTAGER'S WIFE.
COUNTRY GIRL.

Servants and Gamekeepers.

LOVERS' VOWS.

ACT I.

SCENE, *a Road near a Town. The last Houses of a small Village are visible.*

Enter LANDLORD *from a Public House, drawing* WILHELMINA *after him.*

Land. There's no longer any room for you, I tell you. We have a wake to-day in our village, and all the country people, as they pass, will come into my house with their wives and children; so I must have every corner at liberty.

Wil. Can you thrust a poor sick woman out of doors?

Land. I don't thrust you.

Wil. Your cruelty will break my heart.

Land. It will not come to that.

Wil. I have spent my last penny with you.

Land. That is the very reason why I send you away. Where can you procure any more?

Wil. I can work.

Land. Why, you can scarcely move your hand.

Wil. My strength will return.

Land. When that is the case, you may return too.

Wil. Where shall I remain in the mean time?

Land. It is fine weather. You may remain any where.

Wil. Who will clothe me, when this my only wretched garment is drenched with dew and rain?

Land. He who clothes the lilies of the field.

Wil. Who will bestow on me a morsel of bread to allay my hunger?

Land. He who feeds the fowls of the air.

Wil. Cruel man! you know I have not tasted any thing since yesterday morning.

Land. Sick people eat little: it is not wholesome to overload their stomachs.

Wil. I will pay honestly for every thing I have.

Land. By what means? These are hard times.

Wil. My fate is hard too.

Land. I'll tell you what. This is the high-road, and it is much frequented. Ask some compassionate soul to bestow a trifle on you.

Wil. I beg! No; rather will I starve.

Land. Mercy on us! What a fine lady! Many an honest mother's child has begged before now, let me tell you. Try, try. Custom makes every thing easy.—(Wilhelmina *has seated herself upon a stone under a tree.*)—For instance, here comes somebody. I'll teach you how to begin.

Enter a LABOURER, *with his tools.*

Good day to you!

Lab. Good day!

Land. Neighbour Nicholas, will you bestow a trifle on this poor woman?—(Labourer *passes and exit.*)—That was not of much use, for the poor devil is himself obliged to work for his daily bread. But yonder I see our fat far-

mer, who puts three hellers into the poor-box every sunday. Who knows but he may be charitably inclined on a week-day too?

Enter a FAT FARMER, *walking very leisurely.*

Good morning to you, Sir; good morning to you! There's a poor sick woman sitting under yon tree. Will you please to bestow a trifle on her?

Far. Is she not ashamed of herself? She is still young, and can work.

Land. She has had a fever.

Far. Ay, one muſt work hard now-a-days, one muſt toil from morn to night, for money is scarce.

Land. Pay for her breakfast, will you, Sir? She is hungry.

Far.—(As he passes.)—We have had a bad harvest this year, and the distemper has killed my best cattle.

[*Exit.*

Land. The miser! That fellow is always brooding over his dollars. By the way, now, that I am talking of brooding, I remember my old hen ought to hatch her eggs to-day: I must look after her directly.

[*Exit into the house.*

(Wilhelmina *is left alone. Her dress betrays extreme poverty. Her countenance bears the marks of sickness and anxiety, yet the remains of former beauty are still visible.)*

Wil. Oh, God! thou know'st I never was thus unfeeling, while I still possessed any thing. Oh thou, whose guardian power has hitherto protected me from dark despair, accept my thanks. Oh that I could but work again! This fever has completely deprived me of my strength. Alas! if my Frederick knew that his mother was fallen a victim to penury—Is he still alive? Or

does some heap of earth already cover him? Thou author of my sufferings, I will not curse thee. God grant thee prosperity and peace, if such blessings ever be bestowed upon the seducer of innocence. Should chance conduct thee hither; shouldst thou, amidst these rags, and in this woe-worn form, recognize thy former blooming Wilhelmina, what, what would be thy sensations! Alas! I am hungry. Oh that I had but a morsel of bread! Well, I will endeavour to be patient. I shall surely not be allowed to starve on the highway.

Enter a COUNTRY GIRL, *carrying eggs and milk to market. She is passing nimbly on, and sees* Wilhelmina.

Girl. God bless you, good woman!

Wil. I thank you sincerely. Dearest girl, can you bestow a piece of bread on a poor woman?

Girl.—*(Stopping with a look of compassion.)*—Bread! No; I can't, indeed, for I have none. Are you hungry?

Wil. Alas! yes.

Girl. Good Heavens! I have eat all my bread for breakfast, and I have no money. I am going to the town; and when I have sold my milk and eggs, I'll bring you a dreyer. But—you will still be hungry 'till I return.—Will you drink some of my milk?

Wil. Yes, my good child.

Girl. There, then! Take as much as you like.—*(Holds the pail to her lips with great kindness.)*—Won't you have a little more?—Drink!—Drink!—You are very welcome.

Wil. Heaven reward you for your charity! You have preserved me.

Girl. I am glad to hear it.—*(Nods kindly to her.)*—Good day!—God bless you! [*Exit singing.*

Wil.—(*Looking after her.*)—Such formerly was I—as happy, as contented, as susceptible of good impressions.

Enter a GAMEKEEPER, *with a gun, and a brace of pointers.*

Wil. I wish you good diversion, honest man.

Gam.—(*As he passes.*)—Damnation! The first thing I meet on my road is an old woman! I would as soon have seen a magpie, or the devil. I'm sure to have bad sport to-day—Perhaps not a shot. Go to hell, you old harridan! [*Exit.*

Wil. That man conceals the hardness of his heart behind the veil of superstition. Here comes some one else—A Jew! If I could beg, I would implore his aid; for Christians bear but the name of Christians, and scarcely ever recollect the doctrines they profess to follow.

Enter a JEW, *who, as he passes, espies* Wilhelmina, *stops, and surveys her for a moment.*

Wil. Heaven bless you!

Jew. I thank you, poor woman. You look ill.

Wil. I have had a fever.

Jew.—(*Hastily puts his hand into his pocket, draws out a small purse, and gives her some money.*)—There! I can spare no more, for I have but little myself. [*Exit.*

Wil.—(*Calling after him with great emotion.*)—A thousand thanks!—A thousand thanks! Was I wrong in my conjecture? The heart and the creed have no concern with each other.

Enter FREDERICK, *with his knapsack on his back. He walks cheerfully on, and is humming a tune; but at the sight of the sign over the door of the public house, stops.*

Fre. H—m! I'll quench my thirst here, I think. This hot weather makes me feel quite parched. But let me consult my pocket in the first place.—*(Draws out a little money, and counts it.)*—I think I have as much as will pay for my breakfast and dinner; and at night, please God, I shall have reached home.—Holla! landlord! —*(Espies* Wilhelmina.*)*—But what do I see yonder? A poor sick woman, who appears to be quite exhausted. She does not beg, but her countenance claims assistance. Should we never be charitable till we are asked, and reminded that we ought to be so? Shame on it! No. I must wait till noon before I drink. If I do a good action, I shall not feel either hungry or thirsty.—There! *(Goes towards her in order to give her the money, which he already held in his hand to pay for his liquor.)*

Wil.—(Surveying him minutely, utters a loud shriek.) —Frederick!

Fre.—(Starts, gazes intently on her; casts away his money, knapsack, hat, stick, in short, every thing which encumbers him, and rushes into her arms.)—Mother!— *(Both are speechless.* Frederick *first recovers.)*—Mother! For God's sake—Do I find you in this wretched state?— Mother!—What means this?—Speak!

Wil.—(Trembling.)—I cannot—speak—dear son—dear Frederick—The bliss—the transport—

Fre. Compose yourself—dear, good mother!—*(She rests her head on his breast.)*—Compose yourself.—How you tremble!—You are fainting.

Wil. I am so weak—I feel so ill—my head is so giddy —All yesterday I had nothing to eat.

Fre.—(*Springing up with looks of horror, and hiding his face with both hands.*)—Almighty God!—(*Runs to his knapsack, tears it open, and draws out a piece of bread.*)—Here is some bread?—(*Collects the money which he had thrown away, and adds to it what he has in his pocket.*)—Here is my little stock of money. I'll sell my coat—my cloak—my arms. Oh, mother, mother!—Holla, there! Landlord!—(*Knocks violently at the door of the public house.*)

Land.—(*Looking out of a window.*)—What now?

Fre. A bottle of wine! Directly! Directly!

Land. A bottle of wine!

Fre. Yes, I tell you.

Land. For whom, pray?

Fre. For me!—Zounds!—Be quick.

Land. Well—But, Mr. Soldier, can you pay for it?

Fre. Here is the money. Make haste, or I'll break every window in your house.

Land. Patience! Patience! [*Shuts the window.*

Fre.—(*To his mother.*)—Fasted all day! And I had plenty! Last night I had meat and wine to supper, while my mother was fasting.—Oh, God! Oh, God!—How is all my joy embittered!

Wil. Peace, my dear Frederick. I see you again—I am well again. I have been very ill—and had no hopes of ever beholding you once more on earth.

Fre. Ill! And I was not with you! Now I'll never leave you again. See! I am grown tall and stout. I can work for you.

Enter LANDLORD *with a bottle and glass.*

Land. Here's wine for you! A precious vintage, I promise you. Such a glass is not to be tasted every day. To be sure it is only Franconia wine; but it has the sourness of Rhenish.

Fre. Give me it directly. What is the price of the trash?

Land. Trash! Such a capital article as that, trash! The real juice of the grape, I promise you. I sell none of your common vintner's balderdash. I have another precious wine in my cellar, which you shall taste. Such a fine rich oily flavour!—(Frederick *impatiently attempts to take the bottle and glass from him.)*—Hold! Hold! The money, first, if you please. This bottle costs half a guilder.

Fre.—(Giving him all his money.)—There! There!—*(Pours out a glass, and gives it to his mother, who drinks, and eats a little bread with it.)*

Land.—(Counting the money.)—There ought to be another dreyer—But, however, one muſt have compassion. As it is intended for the poor old woman, I'll not inſiſt upon the dreyer. But take care you don't break the bottle or glass. [*Exit.*

Wil. I thank you, dear Frederick. Wine from a son's hands inſtills new life.

Fre. Don't talk too much, mother, till you have recovered your strength.

Wil. Tell me how you have fared during the last five years.

Fre. I have met with good and bad luck mixed together. One day my pocket was full—the next I was worth nothing.

Wil. It is long ſince you wrote to me.

Fre. Why, my dear mother, postage is one of the severest taxes on a soldier. Consider how far we were quartered from you—A letter would almost have cost me half a year's pay; and I must have something to subsist on. I always consoled myself with the idea that my mother was in good health, and that it would make no great difference if I deferred my letter for another week or

two. Thus one week passed after another. Forgive me, mother.

Wil. When anxiety is at an end, it is easy to forgive. Have you, then, obtained your discharge?

Fre. No, not yet. I have only procured leave of absence for a couple of months. This I did for certain reasons; but as you want me, I will remain with you.

Wil. That is not necessary, my dear Frederick. Your visit will enliven me, and restore me to health. I shall then be again strong enough to work; and you can return to your regiment; for I would not interfere with your fortune. But you said you had obtained leave of absence for certain reasons—May I know those reasons?

Fre. You shall know all, mother. When I left you five years since, you had provided me plentifully with clothes, linen and money; but one trifle you had forgotten—the certificate of my birth. I was then a wild, careless lad, but fifteen years of age, and thought little of the matter. This has since occasioned me much uneasiness. Often, when I have been heartily tired of a soldier's restless life, I have wished to obtain my discharge, and learn some reputable trade. But whenever I applied to any tradesman, his first question always was, "Where is the certificate of your birth?" This silenced me. I was vexed, and remained a soldier; for in that profession it is only asked whether the heart be in the right place, and a certificate of birth is as little regarded as the diploma of nobility. The circumstance, however, led me into many a quarrel. My comrades were become acquainted with it; and if any of them owed me a grudge, or were rather drunk, they would sneer at me, and torment me with sarcastic remarks. Once or twice I had been so far exasperated as to fight, the consequence of which was, that I was placed under arrest, and severely reprimanded. At length my commanding officer,

on another of these quarrels taking place, about five weeks ago, summoned me to attend him in his own room. Oh, mother! he is a noble, generous man! "Boetcher," said he to me, "I am sorry to hear that you are so constantly incurring punishment by being engaged in quarrels; for in other respects I am satisfied with your attention to the service, and have a good opinion of you. The serjeant has told me the cause of all this. I, therefore, advise you to write home for the certificate of your birth; or, if you rather chuse to fetch it yourself, I will grant you leave of absence for a couple of months." Oh, mother! your form floated before my eyes while he addressed me. I kissed his hand, and stammered out my thanks. He then put a dollar into my hand. "Go, my lad," said he; "I wish you a good journey. Don't fail to return at the appointed time."—Well, mother, here I am, as you see; and now you know all that has happened.

Wil.—(Who has listened to him with great confusion and embarrassment.)—You are come, therefore, dear Frederick, for the certificate of your birth?

Fre. Yes.

Wil. Oh, Heavens!

Fre. What is the matter?—(Wilhelmina *bursts into a flood of tears.)*—For God's sake, what is the matter?

Wil. You can have no certificate of your birth.

Fre. Can have none!

Wil. You are a natural son.

Fre. Indeed!—And who is my father?

Wil. Alas! the wildness of your look destroys me.

Fre.—(Recollecting himself, in a gentle and affectionate tone.)—No, dear mother, I am still your son; but tell me, who is my father?

Wil. When you left me five years since, you were still too young to be entrusted with such a secret. You have

now reached an age at which you have a claim upon my confidence. You are become a man, and a good man. My sweet maternal hopes are quite fulfilled. I have often heard how consoling, how reviving to a sufferer was the communication of her sorrows. The tears which those sorrows draw from another's eyes, alleviate the pangs which the sufferer seemed for ever destined to endure. Thanks, thanks to benignant Heaven, the hour at last is come, when I may, for the first time, feel this consolatory sensation. My son is my confidant—be he also my judge. Of a rigid judge I must be afraid; but my son will not be rigid.

Fre. Proceed, good mother. Relieve your heart.

Wil. Yes, dear Frederick, I will tell you all—Yet—shame and confusion bind my tongue. You must not look at me during my recital.

Fre. Do I not know my mother's heart? Cursed be the thought which condemns you for a weakness: of a crime you are incapable.

Wil. Yonder village, whose church you at a distance see towering above the trees, is my native place. In that church I was baptized. In that church I was first instructed in our faith. My parents were worthy pious cottagers. They were poor, but strictly honest. When I was fourteen years of age, the lady of the manor one day saw me. She was pleased with me, took me with her to the castle, and felt a pleasure in forming my rude talents. She put good books into my hands. I read; I learnt French and music. My conceptions and capacity developed themselves. But at the same time my vanity—Yes—under the mask of reserve I became ridiculously vain. I was seventeen years old when the son of my benefactress, who was an officer in the Saxon service, obtained leave to visit his relations. I had never before seen him. He was a handsome and engaging

young man. He talked to me of love and marriage. He was the first who had done homage to my charms. Do not look at me, dear Frederick, or I cannot proceed.—(Frederick *casts down his eyes, and presses her hand to his heart.*)—I was a credulous being, and was easily robbed of my innocence. The hypocrite feigned the most ardent affection—promised to marry me at the death of his aged mother—vowed fidelity and constancy—alas!—and I forgot my pious parents—the precepts of our good old pastor—the kindness of my benefactress—I became pregnant. Oh, Frederick! Frederick! whenever I look at yonder church, the late venerable pastor with his silver locks seems to stand before me. On the day that I first went to confession, how did he affect my young heart! How full of true devotion and of virtue was my mind! At that time I would have ventured with a certainty of triumph upon any temptation, and (Oh, God! how was it possible!) this deep, this rooted impression did a wild, unthinking youth erase by a few lovesick looks, by a few lovesick words! I became pregnant. We both awoke from the sweet delirium, and beheld with horror the prospect of futurity. I had ventured every thing. He feared the anger of his mother, who was a good woman, but inexorably strict and rigid. How kindly did he implore me, how impressively did he conjure me, not to betray him! How affectionately, how tenderly, did he promise to reward me at a future period for all that I endured on his account!—He succeeded. I pledged to him my word that I would be silent, that I would bury the name of my seducer, as well as his much-loved form in my heart; that for his sake I would encounter every misfortune which awaited me—for, oh, how dearly did I love him! Much, much, indeed, I have encountered. He departed, satisfied with my promise. The time of my delivery ap-

proached, and I found it impossible any longer to conceal my situation. Alas! I was harshly treated when I persisted in my determination not to confess who was the father of my child. I was driven from the castle with every mark of disgrace; and, when I reached the door of my afflicted parents, I was again refused admittance. My father would have exceeded all bounds; but my mother tore him hastily away, at the moment he was about to curse me. She returned, threw me a crooked dollar, which she wore round her neck, and wept. Since that day I have never seen her. The dollar I have still in my possession.—(*Produces it.*)—Rather would I have starved than have parted with it.—(*Gazes at it, kisses it, and puts it again in her bosom.*)—Without a home, without money, without friends, I wandered a whole night through open fields. I once came near the stream where the mill stands, and almost was I tempted to throw myself under the wheels of the mill, and thus put an end to my miserable existence. But suddenly our pastor's venerable form again appeared to me. I started back; and while I thought I saw him, all his instructions occurred to me, and roused my confidence. As soon as the morning dawned I went to his house. He received me with kindness, and did not reproach me. "What is done," said he, "cannot be undone. God is merciful to the penitent. Reform, my daughter, and all may yet be well. You must not remain in the village, for that will only be a mortification to you, and likewise a scandal to my parish. But—" Here he put a piece of gold into my hand, and delivered to me a letter, which he had written for me.—"Go to the town, my daughter, and seek the honest old widow to whom this letter is addressed. With her you may remain in safety, and she will teach you how to earn an honest livelihood." With these words he laid his hand upon my

head, gave me his blessing, and promised to appease my father's resentment. Oh! I felt newly born; and on my way to the town, I reconciled myself with the Almighty, by solemnly vowing never again to swerve from the path of virtue.—I have kept my vow.—Now look at me again, Frederick.—(Frederick *clasps her with speechless emotion in his arms.—A pause.*)—Your birth was to me the cause of much joy, and of much sorrow. I twice wrote to your father—but—Heaven knows whether he received my letters; I never have received any answer to them.

Fre.—(*Violently.*)—Never any answer!

Wil. Check your indignation, my son. It was in time of war, and the regiment to which he belonged was in the field. There was a commotion through the whole empire; for the troops of three powers were alternately pursuing each other. How easily, therefore, might my letters be lost! No, I am certain he never received them; for he was not a villain. After that time, I did not chuse to trouble him, from a sensation—perhaps of pride. I thought, if he had not forgotten me, he would come in search of me, and would easily learn from the pastor where I was to be found—But he did not come; and some years after, I even heard—(*with a sigh*)—that he was married. I then bade farewell to my last hope. In silent retirement I earned my subsistence by manual labour, and by instructing a few children in what I myself had learnt at the castle. You, dear Frederick, were my only comfort; and on your education I bestowed every thing which was not absolutely necessary for my own subsistence. My diligence was not ill rewarded, for you were a good boy; but the wildness of your youthful ardour, your bent towards a soldier's life, and your resolution to seek your fortune in the wide world, caused me much uneasiness. At last I thought it must be as

God ordained; and if it were your destination, I ought not to prevent it, even if the parting were to break my heart. Five years ago, therefore, I allowed you to go, and gave you as much as I could spare—Perhaps more than I could spare; for I was in good health, and then we are not apt to anticipate illness. Had this continued, I could have earned more than I wanted; I should have been a rich woman in my situation, and could have made my son an annual Christmas present. But I was attacked by a lingering and consuming illness. My earnings were at an end, and my little savings were scarcely sufficient to pay my physician and my nurse. A few days since, therefore, I was obliged to leave my little hut, being no longer able to discharge the rent, and was compelled to wander on the highway with this stick, this sack, and these rags, soliciting a morsel of bread from the charity of those who happened to pass.

Fre. Had your Frederick suspected this, how bitter would have been to him every morsel which he eat, and every drop which he drank! Well, Heaven be praised that I have found you alive at my return; for now I will remain with you for ever. I will send information of this to my commanding officer, and he may take it in what light he pleases; for if he even call it desertion, I will not again forsake my mother. Alas! I have unfortunately learnt no art, no trade; but I have a couple of stout nervous arms, with which I can guide the plough, or wield the flail. I'll hire myself to some farmer as a day-labourer, and at night write for some lawyer. I write a good legible hand, thanks to you, my dear mother. We shall succeed, no doubt. God will assist us. God is ever ready to support those who revere their parents.

Wil.—(*Clasps him with emotion in her arms.*)—What princess can offer me any thing in exchange for such a blissful moment?

Fre. One thing I had forgotten, mother. What was my father's name?

Wil. Baron Wildenhain.

Fre. And does he live on this estate?

Wil. There formerly his mother lived. She is dead. He married a rich lady in Franconia, and, as is said, through affection for her, went to dwell there. A steward occupies the castle, who manages every thing as he likes.

Fre. I will away to the Baron—I will face him boldly. I will bear you upon my back to him. How far is it to Franconia?—Twenty to thirty miles, perhaps.—How! Did he escape his conscience by flying so short a way? Truly, it must be a lazy, sluggish conscience, if, after following him twenty years, it has not yet overtaken him. Oh, shame, shame on him! Why should I claim acquaintance with my father, if he be a villain? Cannot my heart be satisfied with a mother—a mother who has taught me to love? Why should I seek a father who teaches me to hate? No? I will not go to him. He may remain quietly where he is, feasting and revelling till his last hour, and then he may see what account he can give of his actions to the Almighty Judge. We do not want him, mother; we will live without him.—But what is the matter? How your countenance is altered in a single moment!—Mother, what is the matter?

Wil.—(*Very much exhausted, and almost fainting.*)—Nothing, nothing. The transport—Too much talking. I should like a little rest.

Fre. Heavens! I never perceived before that we were on the highway.—(*Knocks at the door of the public house.*) Holla! Landlord!

Land.—(*Opening the window.*)—Well! What now?

Fre. Let this good woman have a bed directly.

Land.—(With a sneer.)—She have a bed, indeed!—Ha! Ha! Ha!—A pretty joke, truly! She slept last night in my stable, and has, perhaps, bewitched all the cattle in it. [*Shuts the window.*

Fre.—(Taking up a stone in a rage.)—Infernal scoundrel!—*(Looks at his mother, and throws the stone away.)* Oh, my poor mother!—*(Knocks in the anguish of despair at the door of a cottage, which stands further in the background.)*—Holla! Holla!

Enter a COTTAGER *from the hut.*

Cot. God bless you! What do you want!

Fre. Good friend, you see that this poor sick woman is fainting in the open air. She is my mother. Let her have some little spot to rest upon for half an hour. For Heaven's sake, do; and God will reward you for it.

Cot. Hold your tongue. I understand you.—*(Putting his head into the house.)*—Rachel, make up the bed directly. You may lay the child on the bench while you do it.—*(Returns.)*—Don't begin a long history again about God's reward and Heaven's blessing. If God were to reward all such trifles, he would have enough to do.—Come! take hold of the good woman on that side, while I support her on this, and let us lead her in with care. She shall have as good a bed as I am worth; but she will not find much more in my cottage, I must own.

[*They conduct her into the hut.*

END OF ACT I.

ACT II.

SCENE, *a Room in the Cottage.* WILHELMINA *is discovered sitting on a wooden Stool, and resting her Head on* FREDERICK'S *Breast. The* COTTAGER *and his* WIFE *are busily employed in procuring whatever can conduce to the Comfort of their sick Guest.*

Fre. Have you nothing which will refresh and strengthen her, good people?

Wife. Run, husband, and fetch a bottle of wine from our neighbour's public house.

Fre. Oh, spare yourselves that trouble. His wine is as sour as his disposition. She has already drank some of it, and I fear it has poisoned her.

Cot. Look, Rachel, whether the black hen has laid an egg this morning. A new-laid egg, boiled soft——

Wife. Or a handful of ripe currants——

Cot. Or—the best thing I have—a piece of bacon——

Wife. There is still a little brandy standing below in the dairy.

Fre.—*(Deeply affected.)*—God reward and bless you for your readiness to assist my poor mother!—*(To* Wilhelmina.)—You have heard these good people?—(Wilhelmina *nods.)*—Can you relish any thing they have offered?—(Wilhelmina *makes a motion with her hand that she cannot.)*—Alas! is there, then, no surgeon in the neighbourhood?

Cot. We have a farrier in the village, whom we always call Doctor; and I never saw any other in my life.

Fre. Merciful Heavens! What shall I do? She will die in my arms! Gracious God! have compassion on our distresses. Pray, pray, good people—I cannot pray.

Wil.—*(In a broken voice.)*—Be at ease, dear Frederick—I am well—only faint—very faint.—A glass of—good wine——

Fre. Yes, mother, instantly. Oh, God! where can I procure it? I have no money. I have nothing at all.

Wife. There! Now, you see, husband, if you had not carried the money to the steward yesterday——

Cot. I might have assisted this good woman. Why, that's true, to be sure. But how are we to manage matters now? As true as I am an honest man, I have not a single dreyer in the house.

Fre. Then I will—yes, I will beg—and if no one will be charitable, I will steal. Good people, take care of her, and do what you can for her. I shall soon be with you again. [*Exit.*

Cot. If he would go to our pastor's, I am sure he would succeed.

Wil. Is the old pastor still alive?

Wife. Oh, no. God bless his worthy heart. He died about two years since, old, and weary of life.

Cot. Yes, he went out like a lamp, as one may say.

Wife.—*(Wiping her eyes.)*—We have shed many a tear for the loss of him.

Cot.—*(The same.)*—He was our father.

Wil.—*(Deeply affected.)*—Our father.

Wife. We shall never have such another.

Cot. Come, come! give every one his due—and despise nobody. Our present pastor is a good worthy man too.

Wife. Why, he is, to be sure; but he is so young.

Cot. I own his appearance does not claim quite so much respect, and we can't confide in him so soon; but our late pastor had been young too.

Wife.—*(To* Wilhelmina.)—This gentleman was tutor to our Baron's daughter; and as my Lord was very well satisfied with him, he gave him this living.

Cot. Ay, and he deserved it too; for the young lady of the castle (God bless her!) is a friendly, kind creature as ever lived.

Wife. Yes, she has no pride; for when she comes into the church, she nods here and there, on this side and on that, to all the country women.

Cot. And when she is in the pew, she holds her fan before her face, and prays with real devotion.

Wife. And during the sermon she never turns her eyes from the pastor.

Wil.—*(Alarmed.)*—What lady is this?

Cot. Our Baron's daughter.

Wil. Is she here?

Wife. To be sure she is. Didn't you know that? It will be five weeks next Friday since my Lord's family arrived at the castle.

Wil. Do you mean Baron Wildenhain?

Wife. Exactly.

Wil. And his lady?

Cot. His lady his dead. They lived several hundred miles from this place; and during her Ladyship's life the Baron never came hither, which has caused us many a sorrow.—*(In a lower voice, and in a confidential tone.)*—Folks say she was a haughty woman, and full of whims. Well! well! We ought not to speak ill of the dead. Our Baron is a good gentleman. She had no sooner closed her eyes, than he ordered his coach, and came to Wildenhain. Oh! he must like this place; for he was born here, and has often played with me in the meadows, and danced with my wife on a Sunday under the lime-trees. You remember that, Rachel—eh?

Wife. That I do, as well as if it had been yesterday. He used to wear a red coat, and a pair of buckles made of glittering stones.

Cot. Afterwards, when he became an officer, he was rather wild; but we must make allowances for young people. The soil was good, and the best of land sometimes produces weeds.

Wife. But do you recollect, husband, what happened at the castle between him and Boetcher's daughter, Wilhelmina? That was too bad.

Cot. Pshaw! hold your tongue, Rachel. Who would think of talking about that, when so many years are past since it happened, and when nobody knows whether he was really the father of the child? for she never would confess it.

Wife. He was the father, and nobody else, that I am sure of; and I'll bet my best gown and cap upon it. No, no, husband, you must not defend that—it was too bad. Who knows whether the poor creature did not perish in distress? Her father, too, old Boetcher, was driven to his grave by it, and died broken-hearted.

[Wilhelmina *faints.*

Cot.—(Who first observes it.)—Rachel! Rachel! Support her!—Zounds! support her.

Wife. Oh! mercy on us!—The poor woman!

Cot. Away with her to bed directly! Then let us send for the pastor. She will hardly live till morning.

[*They carry her in.*

SCENE, *a Room in the Castle. The breakfast Table is discovered. A* Servant *places on the Table a Tea-urn, a lighted Candle, and a Wax-taper.*

Enter the BARON, *in his Night-gown.*

Baron. Is the Count in bed still?

Ser. No, my Lord. He has sent for his servant to dress his hair.

Baron. I might have discovered that; for the hall, as I passed through it, was scented with *poudre à la Marechal.*—Call my daughter. [*Exit* Servant.

(*The* Baron *fills and lights his pipe.*)

I cannot but think that my friend, the old privy counsellor, has sent me a complete coxcomb. Every thing he says and does is as insipid and silly as his countenance. No—I will not be too hasty. My Amelia is too dear to me to be bestowed on any one who is not worthy of her. I must be rather better acquainted with the young man; for my intimacy with his father shall never induce me to make my daughter miserable. The poor girl would consent, and would then sit in a corner dejected and repining, and blaming her father, who ought to have understood these matters better. What a pity, what a great pity it is, that the girl was not a boy! That the name of Wildenhain must be extinct!—(*blows out the wax-taper, with which he had lighted his pipe*)—and vanish like the flame which I now blow out. My fine estates, my delightful prospects, my honest tenantry—all, all will fall into the hands of a stranger. How unfortunate!

Enter AMELIA *in a careless morning dress.*

Amelia.—*(Kisses the* Baron's *hand.)*—Good morning to you, my dear father.

Baron. Good morning, Amelia. Have you slept well?

Amelia. Oh, yes!

Baron. Indeed! You have slept very well? You were not at all uneasy?

Amelia. No. The gnats, to be sure, hummed rather too much in my ears.

Baron. The gnats! Well, that is of no great consequence. Let a bough of juniper be burnt in the room, and you will not be troubled with them again. Gnats are more easily driven away than maggots.

Amelia. Oh, no. You may drive maggots away by boiling a few peas with a little quicksilver, for that will kill them.

Baron.—*(Smiling.)*—Indeed! It is well for you, Amelia, if you as yet know no maggots which cannot be destroyed by a plate of peas.

Amelia. Oh, you mean maggots in the head. No, father, I am not troubled with them.

Baron. So much the better! But how, indeed, can a lively girl, when only sixteen years of age, be troubled with whims, while she has a father who loves her, and a suitor who begs permission to love her? How do you like the Count von der Mulde?

Amelia. Very well.

Baron. Don't you blush when I mention his name?

Amelia.—*(Feeling her cheeks.)*—No.

Baron. No!—Hem!—Have you not been dreaming of him?

Amelia. No.

Baron. Have not you dreamt at all, then?

Amelia.—(Reflecting.)—Yes. I dreamt of our pastor.

Baron. Ha! Ha! As he ſtood before you, and demanded the ring?

Amelia. Oh, no! I dreamt we were in Franconia, and that he was still my tutor. He was juſt going to leave us, and I wept very much; and when I awoke, my eyes were really wet.

Baron. I'll tell you what, Amelia; when you dream of the pastor again, fancy him at the altar, and you with the Count von der Mulde before him, exchanging the marriage vow. What think you of this?

Amelia. If you desire it, my dear father, I will obey most cheerfully.

Baron. Zounds! No. I don't desire it. But I want to know whether you love him—whether you feel sincere affection for him. When we spent a short time in town last winter, you saw him several times at public places of amusement.

Amelia. Should I feel an affection for all the men I see at public places of amusement?

Baron. Amelia, don't be so stupid. I mean that the Count von der Mulde flirted and paid attention to you, danced a couple of elegant minuets with you, perfumed your handkerchief with *eau de mille fleurs*, and at the same time whispered the Lord knows how many pretty things in your ear.

Amelia. Yes, the Lord knows, as you say, father; but I am sure I don't.

Baron. What! have you forgotten them?

Amelia. If it be your wish, I will endeavour to recollect them.

Baron. No, no. You need not trouble yourself. If you must *endeavour* to recollect them, you will bring them from a corner of your memory, not from a corner of your heart. You don't love him, then?

Amelia. I believe I don't.

Baron.—*(Aside.)*—I believe so too. But I must tell you what connection there is between his visit and my interrogatories. His father is a privy counsellor—a man of fortune and consequence—Do you hear?

Amelia. Yes, my dear father, I hear this, if you desire it: but our pastor always told me I was not to listen to such things; for rank and wealth, he said, were only the gifts of chance.

Baron. Well, well! our pastor is perfectly in the right; but if it happen that wealth and rank are combined with merit, they are to be considered an advantage. Do you understand me?

Amelia. Yes, but—*(with perfect simplicity)*—is that the case with the Count von der Mulde?

Baron.—*(At a loss how to reply.)*—Hem! Why—Hem! His father has rendered important services to the state. He is one of my oldest friends, and assisted me in paying my addresses to your mother. I have always had a sincere regard for him; and as he so much wishes the match between you and his son to take place, from a conviction that you will in time feel an affection for the young man——

Amelia. Does he think so?

Baron. Yes; but it almost seems you are not of the same opinion.

Amelia. Not exactly. But if you desire it, my dear father——

Baron. Zounds! I tell you that in such cases I desire nothing. A marriage without affection is slavery. None should be united, who do not feel attached to each other by a congeniality of sentiments. I don't want to couple a nightingale with a finch. If you like each other, why, marry each other. If you don't, let it alone.—*(In a calmer tone.)*—Do you understand me, Amelia? The

whole matter rests on this question: Can you love the Count? If not, we will send him home again.

Amelia. My dear father, I really don't feel as if I should ever love him. I have so often read a description of love in romances—how strange and unaccountable are the sensations——

Baron. Pshaw! Let me hear no more of your romances; for the authors of them know nothing about love. There are certain little symptoms of it, which can only be learnt by experience. Come, let me ask you a few questions, and answer them with sincerity.

Amelia. I always do so.

Baron. Are you pleased when any one speaks of the Count?

Amelia. Good or ill?

Baron. Good, good.

Amelia. Oh, yes. I like to hear good of any one.

Baron. But do you not feel a kind of sympathy when you hear him mentioned?—*(She shakes her head.)*—Are you not embarrassed?—*(She shakes her head.)*—Don't you sometimes wish to hear him mentioned, but have not courage to begin the subject?—*(She shakes her head.)* Don't you defend him, when any one censures him?

Amelia. When I can, I certainly do; for our pastor—

Baron. I am not talking about the pastor. When you see the Count, how do you feel?

Amelia. Very well.

Baron. Are you not somewhat alarmed when he approaches you?

Amelia. No.—*(Suddenly recollecting herself.)*—But, yes: I am sometimes.

Baron. Ay, ay. Now we come to the point.

Amelia. Because he once trod upon my foot at a ball.

Baron. Amelia, don't be so stupid. Do you cast down your eyes when he is present?

Amelia. I don't cast down my eyes in the presence of any one.

Baron. Don't you arrange your dress, or play with the end of your sash, when he speaks to you?

Amelia. No.

Bar. Does not your face glow when he pays you a compliment, or mentions any thing which refers to love and marriage?

Amelia. I don't remember that he ever mentioned any thing of the kind.

Baron. Hem! Hem! — *(after a pause.)* — Do you ever yawn when he is talking to you?

Amelia. No, my dear father; that would be rude.

Baron. But do you ever feel inclined to yawn on those occasions?

Amelia. Yes.

Baron. Indeed! There are but little hopes, then.— Do you think him handsome?

Amelia. I don't know.

Baron. Don't you know what is meant by the term handsome? Or, don't you *feel* what is meant by the term handsome?

Amelia. Yes, I do; but I never observed him with the idea of discovering whether I thought him handsome.

Baron. This is bad, indeed. When he arrived last night—how did you feel?

Amelia. I felt vexed; for I was just walking with the pastor to the romantic little hill, when the servant so unseasonably called me away.

Amelia. Unseasonably! Indeed!—But another question! Have you not to-day, without intending it, taken more pains in curling your hair, and chosen a more engaging dress?

Amelia.—*(Looking at herself.)*—This dress is not yet dirty. I have only worn it yesterday and the day before.

Baron.—(*Aside.*)—Little consolation for the Count is to be deduced from these replies. Therefore, my dear girl, you will have nothing to do with the Count, I suppose?

Amelia. If you command it, I will.

Baron.—(*Angry.*)—Hark you, Amelia. If you plague me again with your damned *desires* and *commands*, I shall—I shall be almost inclined to command in reality. —(*In a milder tone.*)—To see you happy is my wish, and this can never be effected by a command. Matrimony, my child, is a discordant duet, if the tones do not properly agree; for which reason our great Composer has planted the pure harmony of love in our hearts. I'll send the pastor to you. He can explain these matters more clearly.

Amelia.—(*Delighted.*)—The pastor!

Baron. Yes. He can describe the duties of the married state in better terms than a father. Then examine your heart; and if you feel the Count to be the man towards whom you can fulfil these duties—why, Heaven bless you both! 'Till then, let us say no more upon this subject.—(*Calls.*)—Thomas!

Enter a SERVANT.

Go to the pastor, and request him to come hither for a quarter of an hour, if his business will allow it.

[*Exit* Servant.

Amelia.—(*Calling after him.*)—Tell him I shall be glad to see him, too.

Bar.—(*Looks at his watch.*)—The young Count seems to employ plenty of time in dressing. Come, Amelia, pour out the tea.—(Amelia *seats herself at the table, and attends to the breakfast.*)—What sort of weather is it? Have you put your head out of the window yet?

Amelia. Oh, I was in the garden at five o'clock. It is a delightful morning.

Baron. One may have an hour's shooting, then. I really don't know what to do with this man: he tires me beyond all measure with his frivolous remarks.—Ha! Our guest!

Enter COUNT.

Count. Ah, bon jour, mon Colonel. Fair lady, I kiss your hand.

(Amelia *curtsies, and returns no answer.*)

Baron. Good morning! Good morning! But, my Lord, it is almost noon. In the country you must learn to rise at an earlier hour.

Count. Pardonnez, mon Colonel. I rose soon after your great clock struck six? But my *homme de chambre* was guilty of a *betise,* which has driven me to absolute despair; a loss, which *pour le moment* cannot be repaired.

Baron. I am sorry for it.

(Amelia *presents tea to the* Count.)

Count.—(*As he takes it.*)—Your most obedient and submissive slave! Is it Hebe herself, or Venus in her place?

(Amelia *moves with a smile.*)

Baron.—(*Somewhat peevishly.*)—Neither Venus nor Hebe, but Amelia Wildenhain, with your permission. May one know what you have lost!

Count. Oh, mon dieu! Help me to banish from my mind the *triste* recollection. I am lost in a labyrinth of doubts and perplexities. I am, as it were, *envelopé.* I believe I shall be obliged to write a letter on the occasion.

Baron. Come, come! It is not so very sad a misfortune, I hope.

Count.—(*As he sips his tea.*)—Nectar, I vow! Nectar positively, angelic lady. But, how could I expect any thing else from your fair hands?

Baron. This nectar was sold to me for congo tea.

Amelia. You have still not told us what you have lost, my Lord.

Baron.—(*Aside.*)—His understanding.

Count. You command—your slave obeys. You tear open the wounds which even your fascinating society had scarcely healed. My *homme de chambre*, the *vaut rien!* Oh, the creature is a *mauvais sujet!* When he packed up my clothes the day before yesterday, I said to him, "*Henri*, in that window stands the little *pot de pommade*." You comprehend me, lovely Miss Amelia? I expressly said, "Don't forget it: pack it up." I dare say I repeated this three or four times. "You know, *Henri*," I said to him, "I cannot exist without this *pot de pommade*." For you must know, moſt amiable Amelia, this *pommade* cannot be made in Germany. The people here don't understand it. They can't give it the *odeurs*. Oh! I do assure you it is *incomparable*; it comes *tout droit* from Paris. The manufacturer of it is *parfumeur du roi*. More than once, when I have attended as *dèjour* to Her Royal Highness the Princess *Adelaide*, she has said to me, *Mon dieu, Comte*," the whole *antichambre* is *parfumé* whenever you are my *dèjour*." Now, only conceive, accomplished Miss Amelia—only conceive, my Lord—completely forgotten is the whole *pot de pommade*—left in the window as sure as I am a *cavalier*.

Baron. Yes, unless the mice have devoured it.

Amelia.—(*Smiling.*)—Unpardonable neglect!

Count. It is, indeed! The mice too! *Helas! voila, mon Colonel, une autre raison* for *desespoir*. And could you conceive now that this careless creature, this *Henri*, has been thirty years in our service? Thirty years has he

been provided with every thing necessary for a man of his *extraction*, and how does he evince his gratitude? How does the fellow behave? He forgets the *pot de pommade!* leaves it standing in the window as sure as I am a *cavalier*, and—*oh ciel!* perhaps the vulgar German mice have swallowed the most delicate *parfum* ever produced by France! But it was impossible to moderate my anger. *Diable!* It was impossible—therefore I discharged the fellow on the spot.

Baron.—(*Starting.*)—How! A man who had been thirty years in the service of your family!

Count. Oh! don't be alarmed on my account, *mon cher Colonel.* I have another *in petto*—a charming *valet*, I assure you—*un homme comme il faut*—He dresses hair like a divinity.

Amelia. And poor Henry must be discharged for such a trifle!

Count. What do you say, lovely Miss Amelia? A trifle! Can you call this a mere *bagatelle?*

Amelia. To deprive a poor man of his subsistence——

Count. Mais, mon dieu! How can I do less? Has he not deprived me of my *pommade?*

Amelia. Allow me to intercede in his behalf.

Count. Your *sentimens* enchant me; but your benevolence must not be abused. The fellow has an absolute *quantité* of children, who, in time, when they reach the *age mûr*, will maintain their stupid father.

Amelia. Has he a family too? Oh, I beseech you, my Lord, retain him in your service.

Count. You are *amiable, ma cher Mademoiselle—vraiment, vous etes trés aimable.* You command—your slave obeys. *Henri* shall come, and submissively return you thanks.

Baron.—(*Aside, impatiently rubbing his hands.*)—No. It cannot, shall not be. The coxcomb!—(*Aloud.*)—

What think you, Count, to an hour's diversion in the field before dinner? Do you shoot?

Count.—(*Kissing the ends of his fingers.*)—*Bravo, mon Colonel!* A most charming proposition! I accept it with rapture. Lovely Miss Amelia, you shall see my shooting-dress. It is quite *á la mode de Paris.* I ordered it expressly for this *tour.* And my fowling-piece. Ah, *Monsieur le Colonel,* you never saw such a beauty. The stock is made of mother of pearl, and my arms are carved upon it. Oh! you have no conception of the *gout* displayed in it.

Baron.—(*Drily.*)—I asked you before, my Lord, whether you were a shooter.

Count. I have only been out once or twice in my life, and *par hazard* I killed nothing.

Bar. My gun is plain and old; but I generally bring my bird down.

Enter a SERVANT.

Ser. The pastor begs permission——

Baron. Well, Count, be as quick as you can in putting on your elegant shooting-dress. I shall be ready for you in a few minutes.

Count. I fly. Beauteous Miss Amelia, I feel the *sacrifice* I am making to your father, when for a couple of hours I thus tear myself from his *fille aimable.* [*Exit.*

Baron. Amelia, it is scarcely necessary that I should speak to the pastor, or he to you. But, however, as he is here, leave us together. I have, indeed, other matters, respecting which I wish to have some conversation with him.

Amelia.—(*As she goes.*)—Father, I think I never can love the Count.

Baron. As you please.

Amelia.—(*With great affability as she meets the* Pastor *at the door.*)—Good morning to you, my dear Sir!

Enter PASTOR.

Pastor. By your desire, my Lord———

Baron. No ceremony. Forgive me, if my summons arrived at an inconvenient time. I'll tell you in a few words what I want to mention. I last night received a most wretched translation from the French, which was issued from the press about twenty years ago. I am myself in possession of a very neat German original, of which, without vanity, I am the author. Now, I am required to erase my name from the work, and let it be bound with this vapid translation. I therefore wish to ask you, as the corrector of my book, what you think of this intended combination.

Pastor. Upon my word I do not understand your allegory, my Lord.

Baron. Don't you?—Hem! I'm sorry for it. I was inwardly complimenting myself upon the dextrous way in which I had managed it. Well, to be plain with you, the young Count von der Mulde is here, and wants to marry my daughter.

Pastor.—(*Starts, but immediately recovers his composure.*)—Indeed!

Baron. The man is a Count, and nothing else upon earth. He is—he is—In short, I don't like him.

Pastor.—(*Rather eagerly.*)—And Miss Amelia?

Baron.—(*Mimicking her.*)—As you desire—If you desire—What you desire.—Well, well! you have a better opinion of my understanding, I hope, than to suppose that I should influence her on such an occasion. Were the fellow's head not quite so empty, and his heart not depraved, I must own the connexion would have

pleased me; for his father is one of my most intimate friends; and the match is on many accounts desirable in other respects.

Pastor. In other respects! In what respect can the alliance with a man be desirable, whose head and heart are bad?

Baron. Why—I mean with regard to rank and consequence. I will explain to you my sentiments. If Amelia were attached to another, I would not throw away a remark upon the subject, nor would I ask, "Who is the man"—But—*(pointing to his heart)*—"is all right here? If so, enough—Marry each other—You have my blessing, and I hope Heaven's too." But Amelia is not attached to any other, and that alters the medium through which I consider this subject.

Pastor. And will she never be attached to any one?

Baron. That is, to be sure, another question.—Well, I don't mean—I don't insist upon any thing of the kind. I don't desire or command it, as Amelia says. I only wish to act in such a way as that the Count von der Mulde's father shall not be offended if I don't honour the bill which he has drawn upon my daughter, for he has a right to say *value received*, having conferred many civilities and kindnesses upon me. I wish, therefore, my worthy friend, that you would explain to my daughter the duties of a wife and mother; and when she has properly understood this, I wish you to ask her whether she is willing to fulfil these duties at the side of the young Count. If she says no—not another word. What think you to this?

Pastor. I—to be sure—I must own—I am at your service—I will speak to Miss Amelia.

Baron. Do so.—*(Heaving a deep sigh.)*—I have removed one burden from my mind; but, alas! a far heavier still oppresses it. You understand me. How is

it, my friend, that you have as yet been unable to gain any intelligence upon this subject?

Pastor. I have used my utmost endeavours—but hitherto in vain.

Baron. Believe me, this unfortunate circumstance causes me many a sleepless night. We are often guilty of an error in our youth, which, when advanced in life, we would give our whole fortunes to obliterate: for the man who cannot boldly turn his head to survey his past life must be miserable, especially as the retrospect is so nearly connected with futurity. If the view be bad behind him, he must perceive a storm before him. Well, well! Let us hope the best. Farewell, my friend! I am going to take a little diversion in the field. Do what you have promised in the mean time, and dine with me at my return. [*Exit.*

Pastor.—(Alone.)—What a commission has he imposed upon me! Upon *me!—(Looking fearfully around.)* Heaven forbid that I should encounter Amelia before I have recollected and prepared myself for the interview! At present I should be unable to say a word upon the subject. I will take a walk in the fields, and offer up a prayer to the Almighty. Then will I return. But, alas! the *instructor* must alone return—the *man* must stay at home. [*Exit.*

END OF ACT II.

ACT III.

SCENE, *an open Field. Enter* FREDERICK.

Fre.—(Looking at a few pieces of money, which he holds in his hand.)—Shall I return with this paltry sum—return to see my mother die? No. Rather will I spring into the first pond I meet with. Rather will I wander to the end of the world. Alas! I feel as if my feet were clogged with lead. I can neither proceed nor retreat. The sight of yonder straw-thatched cottage, in which my mother now lies a prey to consuming sorrow—oh, why do my eyes for ever turn towards it? Are there not fertile fields and laughing meadows all around me? Why must my eyes be so powerfully attracted to that cottage, which contains all my joys and all my sorrows? —*(With asperity, while surveying the money.)*—Is this your charity, ye men? This coin was given me by the rider of a stately steed, who was followed by a servant in a magnificent livery, glittering with silver. This was bestowed upon me by a sentimental lady, who was on her travels, and had just alighted from her carriage to admire the beauties of the country, intending hereafter to publish a description of them. "That hut," said I to her, and my tears would not allow me to proceed——"It is very picturesque and romantic," answered she, and skipped into the carriage. This was the gift of a fat priest, in an enormous wig, who at the same time called me an idle vagabond, and thereby robbed his present of its whole value.—*(Much affected.)*—This dreyer was given me by a beggar unsolicited. He shared his little all with me, and blessed me too. Oh! this coin will be of great value at a future day. The Al-

mighty Judge will repay the donor with interest beyond earthly calculation.—*(A pause—then again looking at the money.)*—What can I attempt to buy with this? The paltry sum would not pay for the nails of my mother's coffin—and scarcely for a halter to hang myself with.—*(Looking towards the horizon.)*—Yonder I see the proud turrets of the Prince's residence. Shall I go thither, and implore assistance? Alas! compassion does not dwell in cities. The cottage of Poverty is her palace, and the heart of the poor her temple. Oh, that some recruiting party would pass this way! I would engage myself for five rix-dollars. Five rix-dollars! What a sum! It is, perhaps, at this moment, staked on many a card.—*(Wipes the sweat from his forehead.)*—Father! Father! Upon thee fall these drops of agony! Upon thee fall my despair, and whatever may be its consequences! Oh, mayst thou hereafter pant for pardon, as my poor mother is now panting for a single glass of wine!—*(The noise of shooters is heard at a distance. A gun is fired, and several pointers cross the stage.* Frederick *looks round.)*—Shooters! Noblemen, perhaps! Yes, yes! They appear to be persons of rank. Well! once more will I beg. I beg for a mother. Oh, God! grant that I may find benevolent and charitable hearts.

Enter BARON.

Baron.—(*Looking behind him.*)—Here, here, my Lord!

Enter COUNT, *out of breath.*

That was a sad mistake. The dogs ran this way, but all the game escaped.

Count.—(*Breathing with difficulty.*)—*Tant mieux, tant mieux, mon Colonel.* We can take a little breath then.

(*Supports himself on his gun, while the* Baron *stands in the back-ground, observing the dogs.*)

Fre.—(*Advancing towards the* Count, *with reserve.*) Noble Sir, I implore your charity.

Count.—(*Measuring him from head to foot with a look of contempt.*)—How, *mon ami!* You are a very impertinent fellow, let me tell you. Why you have the limbs of an *Hercule*, and shoulders as broad as those of Cretan Milo. I'll venture to say you can carry an ox on your back—or an ass at least, of which there seem to be many grazing in this neighbourhood.

Fre. Perhaps I might, if you, Sir, would allow me to make the attempt.

Count. Our police is not vigilant enough with respect to vagrants and idle fellows.

Fre.—(*With a significant look.*)—I am of your opinion, Sir.—(*Turns to the* Baron, *who is advancing.*)—Noble Sir, have compassion on an unfortunate son, who is become a beggar for the support of his sick mother.

Baron.—(*Putting his hand into his pocket, and giving* Frederick *a trifle.*)—It would be more praise-worthy in you, young man, to work for your sick mother than to beg for her.

Fre. Most willingly will I do that; but to-day her necessities are too urgent. Forgive me, noble Sir; what you have given me is not sufficient.

Baron.—(*With astonishment and a half-smile.*)—Not sufficient!

Fre. No, by Heaven, it is not sufficient.

Baron. Singular enough! But I don't chuse to give any more.

Fre. If you possess a benevolent heart, give me a guilder.

Baron. For the first time in my life, I am told by a beggar how much I am to give him.

Fre. A guilder, noble Sir. You will thereby preserve a fellow-creature from despair.

Baron. You must have lost your senses, man. Come, Count.

Count. Allons, mon Colonel.

Fre. For Heaven's sake, gentlemen, bestow one guilder on me. It will preserve the lives of two fellow-creatures.—(*Seeing them pass on, he kneels.*)—A guilder, gentlemen! You will never again purchase the salvation of a human being at so cheap a rate.—(*They proceed.* Frederick *draws his side-arms, and furiously seizes the* Baron.)—Your purse or your life!

Baron.—(*Alarmed.*)—How! What? Holla! Help!—(*Several* Gamekeepers *rush in, and disarm* Frederick. *The* Count *in the mean time runs away.*)

Fre. Heavens! what have I done!

Bar. Away with him to the castle! Confine him in the tower, and keep strict watch over him till I return. Take good care lest he should attempt to escape.

Fre.—(*Kneeling.*)—I have only to make one request, noble Sir. I have forfeited my life, and you may do with me what you please; but, oh, assist my wretched mother, who is falling a sacrifice to penury in yonder hut. Send thither, I beseech you, and enquire whether I am telling you a falsehood. For my mother I drew that weapon, and for her will I shed my blood.

Baron. Take him to the tower, I say; and let him live on bread and water.

Fre.—(*As he is led away by the gamekeepers.*)—Cursed be my father for having given me being. [*Exit.*

Baron.—(*Calling to the last of the gamekeepers.*)—Francis! run down to the village. In the first, second, or third house—you will make it out—enquire for a sick woman; and if you find one, give her this purse.

Game. Very well, my Lord. [*Exit.*

Baron. This is a most singular adventure, on my soul. The young man's countenance had noble expression in it; and if it be true that he was begging for his mother, that for his mother he became a robber—Well! Well! I must investigate the matter. It will be a good subject for one of Meissner's sketches. [*Exit.*

SCENE, *a Room in the Castle.*

Enter AMELIA.

Amelia. Why do I feel so peevish and discontented? No one has done any thing to vex me. I did not intend to come into this room, but was going into the garden.—(*She is walking out, but suddenly returns.*)—No, I think I'll stay here. Yet I might as well see whether my auriculas are yet in flower, and whether the apple-kernels, which our pastor lately sowed, be sprung up. Oh, they must.—(*Again turning round.*)—Yet, if any one should come, who wanted to see me, I should not be here, and perhaps the servant might not find me. No. I'll stay here. But the time will pass very slowly.—(*Tears a nosegay.*)—Hark! I hear some one at the front door. No. It was the wind. I must look how my canary-birds do. But if any one should come, and not find me in the parlour—But who can come? Why do I at once feel such a glow spreading over my face?—(*A pause. She begins to weep.*)—What can I want?—(*Sobbing.*)—Why am I thus oppressed?

Enter PASTOR.

(*Approaching him with a friendly air, and wiping away a tear.*)—Oh, good morning, my dear Sir. Reverend

Sir, I should say. Excuse me, if custom makes me sometimes say *dear* Sir.

Pastor. Continue to say so, I beg, Miss Amelia. I feel a gratification in hearing that term applied to me by you.

Amelia. Do you, indeed?

Pastor. Most certainly I do. But am I mistaken, or have you really been weeping?

Amelia. Oh, I have only been shedding a few tears.

Pastor. Is not that weeping? May I enquire what caused those tears?

Amelia. I don't know.

Pastor. The recollection of her Ladyship your mother, perhaps?

Amelia. I could say, yes, but———

Pastor. Oh, I understand you. It is a little female secret. I do not wish to pry into it. Forgive me, Miss Amelia, if I appear at an unseasonable hour, but it is by his Lordship's desire.

Amelia. You are always welcome.

Pastor. Indeed! am I really? Oh, Amelia!

Amelia. My father says that we are more indebted to those who form our hearts and minds, than to those who give us mere existence. My father says this—(*casting down her eyes*)—and my heart says so too.

Pastor. What a sweet recompence is this moment for my eight years of attention!

Amelia. I was wild and giddy. I have, no doubt, often caused you much uneasiness. It is but fair that I should feel a regard for you on that account.

Pastor.—(*Aside.*)—Oh, Heavens!—(*Aloud, and stammering.*)—I—I am—deputed by his Lordship—your father—to explain—Will you be seated?

Amelia.—(*Brings him a chair immediately.*)—Don't let me prevent you, but I had rather stand.

Pastor.—(*Pushes the chair away.*)—The Count von der Mulde is arrived here.

Amelia. Yes.

Pastor. Do you know for what purpose?

Amelia. Yes. He wants to marry me.

Pastor. He does!—(*Somewhat eagerly.*)—But believe me, Miss Amelia, your father will not compel you to marry him against your inclination.

Amelia. I know he will not.

Pastor. But he wishes—he wants to ascertain the extent of your inclination; and has appointed me to converse with you on the subject.

Amelia. On the subject of my inclination towards the Count?

Pastor. Yes—No—towards matrimony itself.

Amelia. What I do not understand must be indifferent to me, and I am totally ignorant of matrimony.

Pastor. For that very reason am I come hither, Miss Amelia. Your father has directed me to point out to you the pleasant and unpleasant side of the married state.

Amelia. Let me hear the unpleasant first, then, my dear Sir. I like to reserve the best to conclude with.

Pastor. The unpleasant! Oh, Miss Amelia, when two affectionate, congenial hearts are united to each other, matrimony has no unpleasant side. Hand-in-hand the happy couple pass through life. When they find thorns scattered on their path, they carefully and cheerfully remove them. When they arrive at a stream, the stronger bears the weaker through it. When they are obliged to climb a mountain, the stronger supports the weaker on his arm. Patience and affection are their attendants. What would be to one impossible, is to the two united a mere trifle; and when they have reached the goal, the weaker wipes the sweat from the forehead of the stronger. Joy or care takes up its abode with

both at the same time. The one never shelters sorrow, while happiness is the guest of the other. Smiles play upon the countenances, or tears tremble in the eyes, of both at the same time. But their joys are more lively than the joys of a solitary individual, and their sorrows milder; for participation enhances bliss, and softens care. Thus may their life be compared to a fine summer's day—fine, even though a storm pass over; for the storm refreshes nature, and adds fresh lustre to the unclouded sun. Thus they stand arm in arm on the evening of their days, beneath the blossomed trees which they themselves have planted and reared, waiting the approach of night. Then—yes—then, indeed—one of them lies down to sleep—and that is the happy one; for the other wanders to and fro, weeping and lamenting that he cannot yet sleep. This is in such a case the only unpleasant side of matrimony.

Amelia. I'll marry.

Pastor. Right, Miss Amelia! The picture is alluring; but forget not that two affectionate beings sat for it. When rank and equipages, or when caprice and levity, have induced a couple to unite themselves for life, matrimony has no pleasant side. While free, their steps were light and airy; but now the victims of their own folly, they drag along their chains. Disgust lowers upon each brow. Pictures of lost happiness appear before their eyes painted by the imagination, and more alluring in proportion to the impossibility of attaining them. Sweet enchanting ideas for ever haunt them, which, had this union not taken place, would, perhaps, never have been realized; but the certainty of which is established, were they not confined by their detested fetters. Thus they become the victims of despair, when, in another situation, the failure of anticipated happiness would but have roused their patience. Thus they accustom them-

selves to consider each other as the hateful cause of every misfortune which they undergo. Asperity is mingled with their conversation—coldness with their caresses. By no one are they so easily offended as by each other. What would excite satisfaction, if it happened to a stranger, is, when it happens to either of this wretched pair, a matter of indifference to the other. Thus do they drag on a miserable life, with averted countenances, and with downcast heads, until the night approaches, and the one lies down to rest. Then does the other joyfully raise the head, and, in a tone of triumph, exclaim, "Liberty! Liberty!" This is, in such a case, the only pleasant side of matrimony.

Amelia. I won't marry.

Pastor. That means, in other words, that you will not love any one.

Amelia. But—yes—I will marry—for I will love—I do love some one.

Pastor.—(*Extremely surprised and alarmed.*)—The Count von der Mulde, then?

Amelia. Oh no, no! Don't mention that silly vain fool.—(*Putting out both her hands towards him with the most familiar confidence.*)—I love you.

Pastor. Miss Amelia! For Heaven's sake——

Amelia. I'll marry you.

Pastor. Me!

Amelia. Yes, you.

Pastor. Amelia, you forget——

Amelia. What do I forget?

Pastor. That you are of noble extraction.

Amelia. What hindrance is that?

Pastor. Oh, Heavens! No. It cannot be.

Amelia. Don't you feel a regard for me?

Pastor. I love you as much as my own life.

Amelia. Well, then marry me.

Pastor. Amelia, have compassion on me. I am a minister of religion, which bestows on me much strength —yet still—still am I but a man.

Amelia. You yourself have depicted the married state in the most lovely colours. I, therefore, am not the girl with whom you could wander hand-in-hand through this life—with whom you could share your joys and sorrows?

Pastor. None but you would I chuse, Amelia, were I allowed that choice. Did we but live in those golden days of equality, which enraptured poets dwell upon, none but you would I chuse. But, as the world now is, such a connexion is beyond my reach. You must marry a nobleman. Amelia Wildenhain was born to be the consort of a titled man. Whether I could make her happy will never be asked. Oh, Heavens! I am saying too much.

Amelia. Never will be asked! Yes; I shall ask that question. Have you not often told me that the heart alone can make a person noble?—*(Lays her hand upon his heart.)*—Oh! I shall marry a noble man.

Pastor. Miss Amelia, call, I beseech you, your reason to your aid. A hundred arguments may be advanced in opposition to such an union. But—just at this moment —Heaven knows not one occurs to me.

Amelia. Because there are none.

Pastor. There are, indeed. But my heart is so full— My heart consents—and that it must not, shall not do. Imagine to yourself how your relatives will sneer at you. They will decline all intercourse with you; be ashamed of their plebeian kinsman; invite the whole family, except yourself, on birth-days; shrug their shoulders when your name is mentioned; whisper your story in each other's ears; forbid their children to play with your's, or to be on familiar terms with them; drive past you in chariots emblazoned with the arms of Wil-

denhain, and followed by footmen in laced liveries; while you humbly drive to church in a plain carriage, with a servant in a grey frock behind it. They will scarcely seem to remember you when they meet you; or should they demean themselves so far as to enter into conversation, they will endeavour, by every mortifying hint, to remind you that you are the parson's wife.

Amelia. Ha! Ha! Ha! Will not that be to remind me that I am happy?

Pastor. Can you laugh on such an occasion?

Amelia. Yes, I can indeed. You must forgive it; for you have been my tutor seven years, and never supported your doctrines and instructions with any arguments so feeble as those you have just advanced.

Pastor. I am sorry you think so—truly sorry, for——

Amelia. I am very glad, for———

Pastor.—(Extremely embarrassed.)—For———

Amelia. For you must marry me.

Pastor. Never!

Amelia. You know me. You know I am not an ill-tempered being; and when in your society, I always become better and better. I will take a great deal of pains to make you happy, or—No, I shall make you happy without taking any pains to effect it. We will live together so comfortably, so very comfortably—until one of us lies down to sleep, and then the other will weep—But that is far, far distant. Come! Consent, or I shall conclude you don't feel any regard for me.

Pastor. Oh! it is a glorious sensation to be a man of honour; but I feel, on this occasion, how difficult it is to acquire that sensation. Amelia, if you knew what tortures you inflict upon me—No—I cannot—I cannot. I should sink to the earth as if struck by lightning, were I to attempt to meet the Baron with such a proposition.

Amelia. I'll do that myself.

Pastor. For Heaven's sake, forbear. To his kindness and liberality am I indebted for my present comfortable circumstances. To his friendship and goodness am I indebted for the happiest moments of my life. And shall I be such an ingrate as to mislead his only child? Oh, God! thou seest the purity of my intentions. Assist me in this trial with thy heavenly support.

Amelia. My father wishes me to marry. My father wishes to see me happy. Well! I will marry and be happy—But with no other than you. This will I say to my father; and do you know what will be his answer? At the first moment he will, perhaps, hesitate, and say, "Amelia, are you mad?" But then he will recollect himself, and add, with a smile, "Well, well! If you wish it, God bless you both!" Then I'll kiss his hand, run out, and fall upon your neck. The villagers will soon learn that I am to be married to you. All the peasants and their wives will come to wish me joy; will implore Heaven's blessing on us; and, oh, surely, surely, Heaven will bless us. I was ignorant before what it could be that lay so heavy on my heart; but I have now discovered it, for the burden is removed. —(*Seizing his hand.*)

Pastor.—(*Withdrawing it.*)—Amelia, you almost drive me to distraction. You have robbed me of my peace of mind.

Amelia. Oh, no, no. How provoking! I hear somebody coming up stairs, and I had still a thousand things to say.

Enter CHRISTIAN.

(*Peevishly.*)—Is it you, Christian?

Chris. Yes, Miss Amelia. Christian Lebrecht Goldman———

Hasten'd hither unto you
Soon as he the tidings knew.

Amelia.—(*Confused.*)—What tidings?

Chris. Tidings which we all enjoy.

Pastor.—(*Alarmed.*)—You have been listening to our conversation, then?

Chris. Not I, most reverend Sir. Listeners hear no good of themselves. An old faithful servant, Miss Amelia, who has often carried her Ladyship your mother in his arms, and afterwards has often had the honour of receiving a box on the ear from her Ladyship's fair hand, wishes, on this happy *occasion*, to wait on you with his *congratulation*.

Sing, oh Muse, and sound, oh lyre!

Amelia. My dear Christian, I am not just now inclined to listen to your lyre. And what can you have to sing about to-day more than usual?

Chris. Oh, my dearest, sweetest young lady, it is impossible that I can be silent to-day.

Sing, oh Muse, and sound, oh lyre!
Grant me more than usual fire.
Hither, hither, hither come,
Trumpet, fife, and kettle-drum!
Join me in the lofty song,
Which shall boldly run along
Like a torrent———

Amelia. It does run along like a torrent indeed, my dear Christian. Pray, try to proceed in humble prose.

Chris. Impossible, Miss Amelia! There has never been a birth, a christening, or a wedding, since I have had the honour to serve this noble family, and the noble family of my late Lady, which old Christian's ready and obedient muse has not celebrated. In the space of forty-

six years, three hundred and ninety-seven congratulations have flowed from my pen. To-day I shall finish my three hundred and ninety-eighth. Who knows how soon a happy marriage may give occasion for my three hundred and ninety-ninth? Nine months after which my four hundredth may perhaps be wanted.

Amelia. To-day is Friday. That is the only remarkable circumstance with which I am acquainted.

Chris. Friday! Very true, Miss Amelia. But it is a day marked by Heaven as a day of joy; for our noble Lord the Baron has escaped a most imminent danger.

Amelia. Danger! My father! What do you mean?

Chris. Unto you I will unfold
What the gamekeepers have told.

Amelia.—(*Impatiently, and with great anxiety.*)—Quick then! What is the matter?

Chris. The Baron and the Count, (good lack!)
Were wand'ring on th' unbeaten track,
And both attentively did watch
For any thing that they could catch.
Three turnip-closes had they past,
When they espied a hare at last.

Amelia. Oh! for Heaven's sake proceed in prose.

Chris. Well, Ma'am, as you insist upon it, I will, if I can. The Baron killed this hare, and a very fine one it is. I have just had the honour of seeing it. His Lordship has wounded it most terribly in the left forefoot.

Amelia.—(*Impatiently.*)—Go on, go on. What happened to my father?

Chris. A second hare had just been found, and the dogs were behaving extremely well, among which it is

no injustice to mention Ponto; for a stauncher dog never went into a field. Well! their Lordships, the Baron and Count, were suddenly accosted by a soldier, who implored their charity. One of the gamekeepers was a witness to the whole transaction at a distance. He saw his Lordship the Baron, actuated by his charitable nature, draw a piece of money from his pocket, and give it to the afore-mentioned soldier. Well! now, what think you? The ungrateful, audacious villain suddenly drew his bayonet, rushed like a mad dog at my master, and if the gamekeepers had not instantly sprung forward, I, poor old man! should have been under the necessity of composing an elegy and an epitaph.

Amelia.—(Affrighted.)—Heavens!

Pastor. A robber—by broad day-light! That is singular indeed.

Chris. I shall write a ballad in Bürger's style on the occasion.

Pastor. Is not the man secured!

Chris. To be sure he is. His Lordship gave orders that, till further investigation could be made, he was to be confined in the tower. The gamekeeper, who brought the intelligence, says, the whole party will soon be here. *—(Walks to the window.)*—I verily believe—the sun dazzles my eyes a little—I verily believe they are coming yonder.

Sing, oh Muse, and sound, oh lyre! [*Exit.*

(Amelia *and the* Pastor *walk to the window.*)

Amelia. I never saw a robber in my life. He must have a dreadful countenance.

Pastor. Did you never see the female parricide in Lavater's Fragments?

Amelia. Horrible! A female parricide! Is there on this earth a creature so depraved? But look! The young man comes nearer. What an interesting, what a noble look he has! That melancholy, too, which overspreads his countenance! No, no; that cannot be a robber's countenance. I pity the poor man. Look! Oh Heavens! The gamekeepers are leading him to the tower. Hard-hearted men! Now they lock the door: now he is left in the horrid prison. What are the unfortunate young man's sensations!

Pastor.—*(Aside.)*—Hardly more distressing than mine.

Enter BARON.

Amelia.—(*Meeting him.*)—I congratulate you on your escape, most sincerely, my dear father.

Baron. Let me have no more congratulations, I beseech you; for old Christian poured out such a volley of them in lyrics and alexandrines, as I came up stairs, that he has almost stunned me.

Pastor. His account is true, then? The story seemed incredible.

Amelia. Is that young man with the interesting countenance a robber?

Baron. He is; but I am almost inclined to believe that he was one to-day, for the first and last time in his life. It was a most extraordinary adventure. The young man begged for his mother, and I gave him a trifle. I might have given him something more, but the game just at that moment occupied my mind. You know, good pastor, when a man is in search of diversion, he pays but little regard to the sufferings of his fellow-creatures. In short, he wanted more. Despair was expressed in his looks, but I turned my back upon him. He then forgot himself, and drew his side-arms; but I'll bet my life

against your head-dress, Amelia, that he is not accustomed to such practices.

Amelia. Oh, I am sure he is not.

Baron. He trembled when he seized me. A child might have overpowered him. I almost wish I had suffered him to escape. This affair may cost him his life, and I might have saved the life of a fellow-creature for a guilder! If my people had not seen it, but the bad example—Come with me into my room, good pastor, and let us consider how we can best save this young man's life; for should he fall into the hands of justice, the law will condemn him without mercy. [*Going.*

Amelia. Dear father, I have had a great deal of conversation with the Pastor.

Baron. Have you? With respect to the holy state of matrimony?

Amelia. Yes, I have told him———

Pastor.—*(Much confused.)*—In compliance with your request———

Amelia. He won't believe me———

Pastor. I have explained to Miss Amelia———

Amelia. And I am sure I spoke from my heart———

Pastor.—*(Pointing to the door.)*—May I beg———

Amelia. But his diffidence———

Pastor. The result of our conversation I will explain in your room.

Baron. What the deuce do you both mean? You won't allow each other to say a word. Amelia, have you forgotten the common rules of civility?

Amelia. Oh, no, dear father! But I may marry whom I like?

Baron. Of course.

Amelia.—*(To the* Pastor.*)*—Do you hear?

Pastor.—*(Suddenly puts his handkerchief to his face.)*—I beg pardon—My nose bleeds. [*Exit.*

Baron.—*(Calling after him.)*—I expect you.

[*Going.*

Amelia. Stop one moment, dear father. I have something of importance to communicate.

Baron.—*(Laughing.)*—Something of importance! You want a new fan, I suppose. [*Exit.*

Amelia.—*(Alone.)*—A fan! I almost believe I do want a fan.—*(Fans herself with her pocket handkerchief.)*—No. This is of no use. The heat which oppresses me is lodged within my bosom. Heavens! how my heart beats! I really love the Pastor most sincerely. How unfortunate it was that his nose should just begin to bleed at that moment! No; I can't endure the Count. When I look at my father or the Pastor, I feel a kind of respect; but I only feel disposed to ridicule the Count. If I were to marry him, what silly tricks I should play with him!—*(Walks to the window.)*—The tower is still shut. Oh! how dreadful it must be to be confined in prison! I wonder whether the servants will remember to take him any victuals.—*(Beckoning and calling.)*—Christian! Christian! Come hither directly. The young man pleases me, though I don't know how or why. He has risked his life for his mother, and no bad man would do that.

Enter CHRISTIAN.

Christian, have you given the prisoner any thing to eat?

Chris. Yes, sweet Miss Amelia, I have.

Amelia. What have you given him?

Chris. Nice rye-bread, and clear pump-water.

Amelia. For shame, Christian! Go into the kitchen directly, and ask the cook for some cold meat. Then fetch a bottle of wine from the cellar, and take them to the prisoner.

Chris. Most lovely Miss Amelia, I
Would you obey most willingly.
But, for the present, he must be satisfied with bread and water; for his Lordship has expressly ordered———

Amelia. Oh, that my father did at first, when he was in a passion.

Chris. What he commands when in a passion, it is his servant's duty to obey in cold blood.

Amelia. You are a silly man, Christian. Are you grown so old without having learnt how to comfort a fellow-creature in distress? Give me the key of the cellar. I'll go myself.

Chris. Most lovely Miss Amelia, I
Would you obey most willingly.
But———

Amelia. Give me the key directly, I command you.

Chris.—*(Presents the key.)*—I shall instantly go to his Lordship, and exonerate myself from any blame which may ensue.

Amelia. That you may. [*Exit.*

Chris.—*(After a pause, shaking his head.)*
Rash will youth be ever found
While the earth shall turn around.
Heedless, if from what they do
Good or evil may ensue.
Never taking any care
To avoid the lurking snare.
Youths, if steady you will be,
Come, and listen all to me.
Poetry with truth shall chime,
And you'll bless old Christian's rhyme.
[*Exit.*

END OF ACT III.

ACT IV.

SCENE, *a Prison in an old Tower of the Castle.*

FREDERICK *is discovered alone.*

Fre. Thus can a few poor moments, thus can a single voracious hour swallow the whole happiness of a human being. When I this morning left the inn where I had slept, how merrily I hummed my morning song, and gazed at the rising sun! I revelled in idea at the table of joy, and indulged myself in the transporting anticipation of again beholding my good mother. I would steal, thought I, into the street where she dwelt, and stoop as I passed the window, lest she should espy me. I would then, thought I, gently tap at the door, and she would lay aside her needle-work to see who was there. Then, how my heart would beat, as I heard her approaching footsteps—as the door was opened—as I rushed into her arms! Farewell, farewell, for ever, ye beauteous airy castles, ye lovely and alluring bubbles. At my return to my native country, the first object which meets my eyes is my dying mother—my first habitation a prison—and my first walk to the place of execution! Oh, righteous God! have I deserved my fate? or dost thou visit the sins of the father on the son? Hold! Hold! I am losing myself in a labyrinth. To endure with patience the afflictions ordained by Providence was the lesson taught me by my mother, and her share of afflictions has been large indeed! Oh, God! thou wilt repay us in another world for all the misery we undergo in this.

[*Gazes towards Heaven with uplifted hands.*

Enter AMELIA *with a Plate of Meat and a Bottle of Wine.*

(*Turning to the side from whence the noise proceeds.*)—Who comes?

Amelia. Good friend, I have brought you some refreshment. You are hungry and thirsty, I dare say.

Fre. Oh, no!

Amelia. There is a bottle of old wine, and a little cold meat.

Fre.—(*Hastily.*)—Old wine, said you? Really good old wine?

Amelia. I don't understand such things; but I have often heard my father say that this wine is a real cordial.

Fre. Accept my warmest thanks, fair generous unknown. This bottle of wine is to me a most valuable present. Oh, hasten, hasten, gentle, benevolent lady! Send some one with this bottle to the neighbouring village. Close to the public-house stands a small cottage, in which lies a sick woman—To her give this wine, if she be still alive.—(*Returns the wine.*)—Away! Away! I beseech you. Dear amiable being, save my mother, and you will be my guardian angel.

Amelia.—(*Much affected.*)—Good man! you are not a villain, not a murderer—are you?

Fre. Heaven be thanked I still deserve that you, good lady, should thus interest yourself in my behalf.

Amelia. I'll go, and send another bottle of wine to your mother. Keep this for yourself. [*Going.*

Fre. Allow me but one more question. Who are you, lovely, generous creature, that I may name you in my prayers to the Almighty?

Amelia. My father is Baron Wildenhain, the owner of this estate.

Fre. Just Heavens!

Amelia. What is the matter?

Fre.—(*Shuddering.*)—And the man whom I attacked to-day———

Amelia. Was my father.

Fre. My father!

Amelia. He quite alarms me. [*Runs out.*

Fre.—(*Repeating the words in most violent agitation.*) Was my father! Eternal Justice! thou dost not slumber. The man against whom I raised my arm to-day was—my father! In another moment I might have been a parricide! Hoo! an icy coldness courses through my veins. My hair bristles towards Heaven. A mist floats before my eyes. I cannot breathe.—(*Sinks on a chair. A pause.*)—How the dread idea rages in my brain! What clouds and vapours dim my sight, seeming to change their forms each moment as they pass! And if fate had destined he should perish thus, if I had perpetrated the desperate deed—whose, all-righteous Judge! whose would have been the guilt? Wouldst thou not thyself have armed the son to avenge on his unnatural father the injuries his mother had sustained? Oh, Zadig!—(*Sinks into meditation. A pause.*)—But this lovely, good, angelic creature, who just left me—What a new sensation awakes in my bosom! This amiable being is my sister! But that animal—that coxcomb, who was with my father in the field—is he my brother? Most probably. He is the only heir to these domains, and seems, as often is the case on such occasions, a spoilt child, taught from his infancy to pride himself on birth, and on the wealth he one day will inherit, while I—his brother—and my hapless mother—are starving!

Enter PASTOR.

Pastor. Heaven bless you!

Fre. And you, Sir! If I may judge by your dress, you are a minister of the church, and consequently a messenger of peace. You are welcome to me in both capacities.

Pastor. I wish to be a messenger of peace to your soul, and shall not use reproaches, for your own conscience will speak more powerfully than I can.

Fre. Right, worthy Pastor! But, when the conscience is silent, are you not of opinion that the crime is doubtful?

Pastor. Yes—unless it has been perpetrated by a most wicked and obdurate heart indeed.

Fre. That is not my case. I would not exchange my heart for that of any prince—or any priest. Forgive me, Sir; I did not intend to reflect on you by that declaration.

Pastor. Even if you did, I know that gentleness is the sister of the religion which I teach.

Fre. I only meant to say that my heart is not callous; and yet my conscience does not tell me that my conduct has to-day been criminal.

Pastor. Do not deceive yourself. Self-love sometimes usurps the place of conscience.

Fre. No! no! What a pity it is that I do not understand how to arrange my ideas—that I can only feel, and am not able to demonstrate! Pray, Sir, what was my crime? That I would have robbed? Oh, Sir! fancy yourself for a single moment in my situation. Have you too any parent?

Pastor. No. I became an orphan when very young.

Fre. That I much lament; for it renders a fair decision on your part impossible. But I will, nevertheless,

describe my situation to you if I can. When a man looks round, and sees how nature, from her horn of plenty, scatters sustenance and superfluity around; when he beholds this spectacle at the side of a sick mother, who, with parched tongue, is sinking to her grave for want of nourishment; when, after having witnessed this, he sees the wealthy, pampered noble pass, who denies him a guilder, though he is on the brink of despair, lest—lest the hare should escape—then, Sir, then suddenly awakes the sensation of equality among mankind. He resumes his rights; for kind nature does not abandon him, though fortune does. He involuntarily stretches forth his hand to take his little share of the gifts which nature has provided for all. He does not rob—but takes what is his due—and he does right.

Pastor. Were such principles universally adopted, the bands of society would be cut asunder, and civilized nations converted into Arabian hordes.

Fre. That is possible; and it is also possible that we should not, on that account, be less happy. Among the hospitable Arabians, my mother would not have been allowed to perish on the highway.

Pastor.—(*Surprised.*)—Young man, you seem to have enjoyed an education above your rank in life.

Fre. Of that no more. I am obliged to my mother for this, as well as every thing else. But I want to explain why my conscience does not accuse me. The judge decides according to the exact letter of the law: the divine should not decide according to the deed itself, but well consider the motives which excited it. In my case, a judge will condemn me; but you, Sir, will acquit me. That the satiated epicure, while picking a pheasant's bone, should let his neighbour's rye-bread lie unmolested, is not to be considered meritorious.

Pastor. Well, young man, allowing your sophistry to be sound argument, allowing that your very particular situation justified you in *taking* what another would not *give*, does this also exculpate you from the guilt of murder, which you were on the point of committing?

Fre. It does not, I am willing to grant; but I was only the instrument of a Higher Power. In this occurrence, you but perceive a solitary link in the chain, which is held by an invisible hand. I cannot explain myself on this subject, nor will I attempt to exculpate myself; yet cheerfully shall I appear before the tribunal of justice, and calmly shall I meet my fate, convinced that an Almighty hand has written with my blood the accomplishment of a greater purpose in the book of fate.

Pastor. Extraordinary young man, it is worth some trouble to become more nearly acquainted with you, and to give another turn, perhaps, to many of your sentiments. If it be in your power, remain with me a few weeks. I will take your sick mother into my house.

Fre.—(Embraces him.)—Accept my warmest thanks for your good intentions. To my mother you may be of service. As to myself, you know I am a prisoner, and must prepare myself for death. Make any use you think proper of the interval, which the forms of law may perhaps allow me.

Pastor. You are mistaken. You are in the hands of a man whose sentiments are noble, who honours your filial affection, compassionates your mournful situation, and sincerely forgives what has happened to-day. You are at liberty. He sent me hither to announce this; and to release you from confinement with the exhortation of a parent, with the admonition of a brother.

Fre. What is the name of this generous man?

Pastor. Baron Wildenhain.

Fre. Wildenhain!—(*Affecting to call some circumstance to mind.*)—Did he not formerly live in Franconia?

Pastor. He did. At the death of his wife, a few weeks since, he removed to this castle.

Fre. His wife is dead, then? And the amiable young lady, who was here a few minutes since, is his daughter, I presume?

Pastor. She is.

Fre. And the young sweet-scented beau is his son?

Pastor. He has no son.

Fre.—(*Hastily.*)—Yes—he has.—(*Recollecting himself.*)—I mean the one who was in the field with him to-day.

Pastor. Oh! he is not his son.

Fre.—(*Aside.*)—Thank Heaven!

Pastor. Only a visitor from town.

Fre. I thank you for the little intelligence you have been kind enough to communicate. It has interested me much. I thank you, too, for your philanthropy; but am sorry I cannot make you an offer of my friendship. Were we equals, it might be of some little value.

Pastor. Does not friendship, like love, destroy all disparity of rank?

Fre. No, worthy Sir. This enchantment is the property of love alone. I have now only to make one request. Conduct me to Baron Wildenhain, and procure me, if possible, a private conversation with him. I wish to thank him for his generosity, and will not trouble him many minutes; but if he be in company, I shall not be able to speak so openly as I wish.

Pastor. Follow me. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE, *a Room in the Castle.*

The BARON *is seated, and smoking a Pipe.* AMELIA *is standing at his Side in Conversation with him. The* COUNT *is stretched upon the Sofa, alternately taking Snuff, and holding a Smelling-bottle to his Nose.*

Baron. No, no, Amelia, don't think of it. Towards evening, when it is cooler, we may, perhaps, take a walk together to see the sick woman.

Amelia. But as it is so delightful to do good, why should it be done through a servant? Charity is a pleasure, and we are surely not too high in rank to enjoy pleasure.

Baron. Pshaw! who said any thing about rank? That was a silly remark, and I could be angry at you for it. I tell you I have sent to the cottage, and the woman is better. Towards evening we will take a walk to the village, and the Pastor, no doubt, will accompany us.

Amelia.—*(Satisfied.)*—Well, if you think so——

[*Seats herself, and begins to work.*

Baron. It will be agreeable to you too, Count, I hope? I dare say you will be gratified.

Count. Je n'en doute pas, mon Colonel. Mademoiselle Amelie's douceur and bonte d'ame will charm me. But I hope the person's disorder is not epidemical. At all events, I am in *possession* of a *vinaigre incomparable,* which is a certain preventative.

Baron. Take it with you then, Count; for I advise you to go by all means. There is no better preventative against *ennui,* than the reviving sight of a fellow-creature grateful for the assistance by which she has been rescued from death.

Count. Ennui, said you? *Ah, mon Colonel*, how could *ennui* find its way to a place inhabited by *Mademoiselle*?

Baron. You are very polite, my Lord. Amelia, don't you thank the Count?

Amelia. I thank your Lordship.

Count.—(Bowing.)—Don't mention it, I beg.

Baron. But, Count, pray have you resided much in France?

Count. Ah, mon Colonel, don't refer to that subject, I beseech you. My father, the *barbare*, was guilty of a terrible *sottise*. He refused me a thousand *louis-d'ors*, which I had destined for that purpose. I was there a few months, to be sure—I have seen that land of extacy, and should perhaps have been there still, in spite of *le barbare* my father, had not a disagreeable circumstance—

Baron.—(Sarcastically.)—An *affaire d'honneur*, I presume?

Count. Point du tout. A *cavalier* could find no *honneur* in the country. You have heard of the revolution there. You must—for all Europe speaks of it. *Eh bien! Imaginez vous.* I was at *Paris*, and happened to be passing the *palais royal*, not knowing of any thing that had occurred. *Tout d'un coup*, I found myself surrounded by a crowd of greasy tatterdemalions! One pushed me on this side—another on that—a third pinched me—a fourth thrust his fist into my face. "What do you mean?" cried I. "How dare you treat me thus?" The mob, *mon Colonel*, grew still more unruly, and abused me because I had not a cockade in my hat—*entendez vous?* a national cockade. "*Je suis un Comte du Saint Empire?*" cried I. What was the consequence? The fellows beat me, *foi d'honnete homme*. They absolutely beat me; and a filthy *Poissarde* gave me a blow on the cheek. Nay, some began to shout "*A la lanterne!* What do you say to this, *mon Colonel?* What

would you have done *à ma place?* I threw myself into my post-chaise, and decamped as speedily as possible. *Voila tout!* It is an *histoire facheuse*; yet still I must regret that I did not enjoy more of the *moments delicieuses* which I tasted in that *capitale du monde*. But this every one must say—this every one must allow, the *savoir vivre*, the *formation*, and the *pli* which is observable in me, are perfectly French, perfectly *à la mode de Paris*.

Baron. Of that I am not able to form any judgment; but your language is a good deal Frenchified.

Count. Ah, mon Colonel! what a high compliment you pay me!

Baron. I beg you will consider it such.

Count. All my care and anxiety, then, have not been *à pure perte*. For five years I have taken all possible pains to forget my native *langue*. For, Miss Amelia, is it not altogether devoid of grace, and not *supportable* in any respect, except when it proceeds from your lovely lips? What an eternal gurgling it causes in the throat? *à tout moment* must one stammer and hesitate. It does not flow in French meanders. *Par exemple*; if I want to make *une declaration d'amour*, why of course I should wish to produce a *chef d'œuvre* of eloquence. *Entendez vous? Helas!* Scarcely have I spoken a *douzaine* of words, when my tongue turns here—then there—first on this side—then on that. My teeth chatter *pêle mêle* against each other; and, in short, if I were not immediately to add a few French words, in order to bring every thing into proper order, I should run the risk of absolutely losing the faculties of speech for ever. And how can this be otherwise? We have no *genies celèbres* to refine the taste. To be sure, there are Germans who pique themselves on *gout*, on *lecture*, on *belles lettres*. There's one *Monsieur* Wieland, who has acquired some

degree of *renommée* by a few old tales, which he has translated from the *mille & une nuits*, but still the original is French.

Baron. But zounds! Count, why are you every moment taking snuff, and holding that smelling-bottle to your nose? And why, I should like to know, must you drench your clothes and my sofa with lavender water? You have so completely scented the room, that a stranger might imagine he was entering the shop of a French milliner.

Count. Pardonnez, mon Colonel; the smoke of tobacco is quite *insupportable*. My nerves are most sensibly affected by it, and my clothes must be exposed to the open air for at least a month. I assure you, *mon Colonel*, my hair, even my hair, catches the infectious vapour. It is a shocking custom, but we must forgive it in the *messieurs de militaire*, who can have no opportunity *en campagne*, of associating with the *beau monde*, and learning the manners of *haut ton*. But really I find it impossible to endure this *horrible* smell. *Vous m'excuserez, mon Colonel.* I must hasten into the open air, and change my clothes. *Adieu, jusqu' au revoir.* [*Exit.*

Baron. Well, heaven be praised, I have discovered a method of driving this creature away, when I am tired of his frivolous conversation!

Amelia. Dear father, I should not like to marry him.

Baron. Nor should I like him to be my son.

Amelia.—(Who evidently shews that she has something on her mind.)—I can't endure him.

Baron. Nor I.

Amelia. How can one help it, if one can't endure a man?

Baron. Impossible!

Amelia. Love is involuntary.

Baron. It is.

Amelia. We are very often ignorant why we either love or hate.

Baron. We are so.

Amelia. Yet there are cases in which inclination or aversion are founded on substantial reasons.

Baron. Certainly.

Amelia. For instance, my aversion to the Count.

Baron. True.

Amelia. And my inclination to the Pastor.

Baron. Right.

Amelia.—(After a pause.)—I must own I should like to be married.

Baron. You shall.

Amelia.—(After a pause.)—Why does not our Pastor marry?

Baron. You must ask himself that question.

Amelia.—(After another pause, during which she rivets her eyes on her work.)—He likes me.

Baron. I am glad of it.

Amelia. I like him too.

Baron. That is but just.

Amelia.—(After another pause.)—I believe, if you were to offer him my hand, he would not refuse it.

Baron. That I believe too.

Amelia. And I would obey you willingly.

Baron.—(Beginning to be more attentive.)—How! Are you in earnest?

Amelia. Yes.

Baron. Ha! Ha! Ha! Well! we will see.

Amelia.—(Cheerfully raising her head.)—Are you in earnest, father?

Baron. No.

Amelia.—(Dejected.)—No!

Baron. No, Amelia, this cannot be. To play such romantic tricks as Abelard and Eloisa, Saint Preux and

Julia; will never do. Besides, our Pastor is too honourable to have any such thoughts.

Amelia. You are his benefactor.

Baron. At least he esteems me in that light.

Amelia. Surely, then, it would be honourable to make the daughter of his benefactor happy.

Baron. But suppose the daughter is a child, who to-day burns with desire to possess a doll, which to-morrow she will throw away with disgust?

Amelia. Oh, I am not such a child.

Baron. Amelia, let me explain this. A hundred fathers would, in my situation, tell you, that, as you are of noble extraction, you must marry a nobleman; but I do not say so. I will not sacrifice my child to any prejudice. A woman never can obtain rank by merit, and has, therefore, no right to be proud of it.

Amelia. Well, and therefore——

Baron. And therefore I should say, "Marry the Pastor with all my heart, if you can't find among our young nobility any one whose mental and personal endowments correspond with your ideas." But of these there are certainly several—perhaps many. You have as yet had no opportunities of seeing them; but next winter we will remove to town, and at some ball, or other place of amusement, you will no doubt meet with one adapted to your taste.

Amelia. Oh, no. I must first become intimately acquainted with a man, and may, perhaps, be then deceived: but I know our Pastor well—I have known him long: I am as perfectly acquainted with his heart as with my catechism.

Baron. Amelia, you have never yet felt the influence of love. The Pastor has been your instructor, and you mistake the warmth of your gratitude for love, not knowing what it really is.

Amelia. You explained it to me this morning.

Baron. Did I: Well, and my questions?

Amelia. Applied exactly to our Pastor. I could have fancied you were acquainted with every sensation of my heart.

Baron. Indeed! Hem!

Amelia. Yes, my dear father, I love, and am beloved.

Baron. Beloved! Has he told you this?

Amelia. Yes.

Baron. Shame on him! He has not acted a proper part.

Amelia. Oh, if you knew how I surprised him——

Baron. You him!

Amelia. He came, by your command, to converse with me respecting the Count, and I told him I would not marry the Count.

Baron. But him?

Amelia. Yes.

Baron. You are very candid, I must confess. And what did he answer?

Amelia. He talked a great deal about my rank, my family, and my duty to you. In short, he wanted to persuade me not to think of him any more; but my heart would not be persuaded.

Baron. That was noble in him. He will, therefore, not say any thing to me upon the subject.

Amelia. No. He declared he should find that impossible.

Baron. So much the better. I may, then, be supposed to know nothing of the matter.

Amelia. But I told him I would mention it to you.

Baron. So much the worse! I am placed in a very awkward situation.

Amelia. And now I have mentioned it.

Baron. You have.

Amelia. Dear father!

Baron. Dear Amelia!

Amelia. The tears come into my eyes.

Baron.—*(Turning away.)*—Suppress them.—(Amelia *after a pause rises, and stoops as if in search of something.)*—What are you seeking?

Amelia. I have lost my needle.

Baron.—*(Pushes his chair back, and stoops to assist her.)*—It cannot have flown far.

Amelia.—*(Approaches, and falls on his neck.)*—My good father!

Baron. What now?

Amelia. This one request!

Baron. Let me go. You make my cheeks wet with your tears.

Amelia. I shall never love any other man—I shall never be happy with any other man.

Baron. Pshaw! Be a good girl, Amelia, and banish these childish fancies.—*(Touches her cheek.)*—Sit down again. We will have some further conversation on this subject at another time. You are not in so very great a hurry, I hope; for affairs of such moment require deliberation. The knot of wedlock is tied in a moment, but the married state endures for years. Many a girl, who shed a tear because she might not marry the object of her affections, sheds a million when she has surmounted all difficulties, and obtained him. You have now shaken the burden from your heart, and your father bears it for you—for his beloved Amelia. Time will probably heal this slight scratch; but if not—why, you yourself shall fix upon a surgeon.

Amelia.—*(Seats herself again, and resumes her work with the appearance of heart-felt gratitude.)*—My dear good father!

Baron. Ay, truly, if your mother had been alive, you would not have escaped so easily. She would have dwelt, as usual, upon the sixteen people whom she called her ancestors.

Enter PASTOR.

Baron. Ha! I am glad you are come.

Pastor. In compliance with your desire, my Lord, I have released the young man from his prison. He waits in the antichamber, and wishes to express his gratitude in person.

Baron. I am glad to hear it. I must not send him away empty-handed. It would have the appearance of half a kindness.

Pastor. He begs to be allowed a private interview.

Baron. Private!—Why?

Pastor. He says he shall be confused in the presence of witnesses. Perhaps, too, he wants to make some discovery which weighs heavy on his mind.

Baron. Well! with all my heart! Go, Amelia, and stay with the Pastor in the antichamber. I wish to have a little conversation with you both afterwards.

[*Exit* Amelia.

The Pastor *opens the door, beckons to* Frederick *that he may come, and exit.*

Enter FREDERICK.

Go, young man, and Heaven's blessing be with you! I have sent to your mother, and find she is better. For her sake I pardon you; but take care you do not again commit such an offence. Robbery is but a bad trade. There is a louis-d'or for you. Endeavour to earn an

honest livelihood; and if I hear that you are sober, diligent, and honest, my doors and my purse shall not be shut to you in future. Now go, and Heaven be with you!

Fre.—(Takes the louis-d'or.)—You are a generous man, liberal in your charity, and not sparing of your good advice. But allow me to beg another, and a still greater favour. You are a man of large property and influence. Procure me justice against an unnatural father.

Baron. How so? Who is your father?

Fre.—(With great asperity.)—A man of consequence; lord of a large domain; esteemed at court; respected in town; beloved by his peasants; generous, upright, and benevolent.

Baron. And yet allows his son to be in want?

Fre. And yet allows his son to be in want.

Baron. Why, yes, for a very good reason, I dare say. You have probably been a libertine, and squandered large sums at a gaming-table, or on some mistress, and your father has thought it advisable to let you follow the drum for a couple of years. Yes, yes. The drum is an excellent remedy for wild young rakes; and if you have been one of this description, your father has, in my opinion, acted very wisely.

Fre. You are mistaken, my Lord. My father does not know me, has never seen me; for he abandoned me while I was in my mother's womb.

Baron. What?

Fre. The tears of my mother are all the inheritance he bestowed upon me. He has never enquired after me—never concerned himself respecting me.

Baron. That is wrong—(*confused*)—very wrong.

Fre. I am a natural son. My poor, deluded mother educated me amidst anxiety and sorrow. By the labour of her hands she earned as much as enabled her, in some

degree, to cultivate my mind; and I therefore think I might be a credit to a father. But mine willingly renounces the satisfaction and the pleasures of a parent, and his conscience leaves him at ease respecting the fate of his unfortunate child.

Baron. At ease! If his conscience be at ease in such a situation, he must be a hardened wretch indeed.

Fre. Having attained an age at which I could provide for myself, and wishing no longer to be a burden to my indigent mother, I had no resource but this coat. I enlisted into a volunteer corps—for an illegitimate child cannot obtain a situation under any tradesman.

Baron. Unfortunate young man!

Fre. Thus passed my early years, in the bustle of a military life. Care and sorrow are the companions of maturer years. To the thoughtless youth nature has granted pleasure, that he may strengthen himself by the enjoyment of it, and thereby be prepared to meet the care and sorrow which await him. But the pleasures of my youth have been stripes; the dainties I have feasted on have been coarse bread and clear water. Yet, what cares my father? His table is sumptuously covered, and to the scourge of conscience he is callous.

Baron.—*(Aside.)*—His words pierce to my heart.

Fre. After a seperation of five years from my mother, I returned to-day, feasting on the visions of anticipated bliss. I found her a beggar on the highway. She had not tasted food for four and twenty hours—She had no straw to rest her head upon—no roof to protect her from the inclemency of the weather—no compassionate fellow-creature to close her eyes—no spot to die upon. But what cares my father for all this? He has a stately castle, and reposes upon swelling beds of down; and when he dies, the Pastor, in a funeral sermon, will descant upon his numerous Christian virtues.

Baron.—(*Shudders.*)—Young man, what is your father's name?

Fre. That he abused the weakness of an innocent female, and deceived her by false vows; that he gave life to an unfortunate being, who curses him; that he has driven his son almost to the commission of parricide—Oh, these are mere trifles, which on the day of retribution may be paid for by this paltry piece of gold.—(*Throws the louis-d'or at the* Baron's *feet.*)

Baron.—(*Almost distracted.*)—Young man, what is your father's name?

Fre. BARON WILDENHAIN!—(*The* Baron *strikes his forehead with both hands, and stands rooted to the spot.* Frederick *proceeds in most violent agitation.*)—In this house, perhaps in this very room, did you beguile my hapless mother of her virtue, and beget me for the sword of the executioner. And now, my Lord, I am not free—I am your prisoner—I will not be free—I am a robber. Loudly I proclaim I am a robber. *You* shall deliver me over to justice. *You* shall accompany me to the scaffold. *You* shall hear the priest in vain attempting to console me, and inspire my soul with hope. *You* shall hear me, in the anguish of despair, curse my unnatural father. *You* shall stand close to me when my head is severed from my body, and my blood—*your* blood shall besmear your garments.

Baron. Hold! Hold!

Fre. And when you turn away with horror from this spectacle, you shall behold my mother at the foot of the scaffold, and hear her breathe her last convulsive sigh.

Baron. Hold, inhuman as thou art.

Enter PASTOR *hastily.*

Pastor. What means this? I heard you speak with violence, young man. Surely you have not dared——

Fre. Yes. I have dared, worthy Pastor, to assume your office, and make a sinner tremble.—(*Pointing to the* Baron.)—Look there! Thus, after one and twenty years is licentious conduct punished. I am a robber, Sir, a murderer; but what I feel at this moment is extacy compared to his sensations. Look at him. Remorse and anguish rend his very heart-strings. I go to deliver myself into the hands of justice, and appear in another world a bloody witness against that man. [*Exit.*

Pastor. For Heaven's sake! what means this? I do not comprehend———

Baron. He is my son! he is my son! Away, my friend! Lend me your aid at this dreadful moment. Away to the sick woman in the village! Francis will direct you to the cottage. Hasten, I beseech you.

Pastor. But what shall I———

Baron. Oh, Heavens! your heart must instruct you how to act.—(*Exit* Pastor.)—Have I lost my senses?—(*Holding his head.*)—Or am I dreaming?—No.—I have a son—a worthy, noble youth, and as yet I have not clasped him in my arms—as yet I have not pressed him to my heart. Matthew!

Enter a GAMEKEEPER.

Where is he?

Game. Who, my Lord? The robber?

Baron. Scoundrel! The young man, who but this moment left me.

Game. He is waiting to deliver himself up; and we have sent for the constable, as he himself desired.

Baron. Kick the constable out of doors if he comes, and let no one dare to lay a hand on the young man.

Game.—(*Astonished.*)—Very well, my Lord.

[*Going.*

Baron. Holla! Matthew!

Game. My Lord!

Baron. Conduct the young soldier into the green chamber over the dining room, and attend on him, if he be in want of any thing.

Game. The Count von der Mulde occupies that chamber, my Lord.

Baron. Turn the Count out, and send him to the devil.—*(The* Gamekeeper *stands in doubt how to proceed, while the* Baron *walks to and fro.)*—I want no son-in-law. I have a son—a son, who shall possess my estates, and continue my name; a son, in whose arms I will die. Yes. I will repair the evils I have caused. I will not be ashamed of recognizing him. All my peasants, all my servants, shall know that, though I could forget, I will not abandon my child. Matthew!

Game. My Lord!

Baron. Conduct him hither. Request him to come hither, and let all my servants accompany him.

[*Exit* Gamekeeper.

How strange are my sensations! My blood courses through my veins so rapidly that I feel my pulse beat from head to foot. How little do I deserve the bliss which is to-day my lot!

Enter FREDERICK, *surrounded by a crowd of servants.*

He comes!—Quick let me press thee to my heart!—*(Rushes towards him, and clasps him with fervour in his arms.)*—My son!

END OF ACT IV.

ACT V.

SCENE, *the Room in the Cottage as in the Second Act.*

WILHELMINA, *the* COTTAGER *and his* WIFE *are discovered.*

Wil. Go to the door once more, good man, and look if he be not coming.

Cot. It will be of no use; I have just been to call on a neighbour, and looked round on every side, but he is not to be seen.

Wife. Have a little patience. Who knows where he may be staying?

Cot. Very true. He is gone to the town, I dare say.

Wife. Ay, and little good will he do there; for people are hard-hearted enough there.

Wil. Good man, do look once more. He may, perhaps, be coming, now.

Cot. Well! well! I'll look. [*Exit*

Wife. If your son knew what Heaven has sent you since he left us, he would soon return.

Wil. I feel alarmed respecting him.

Wife. Alarmed! Pshaw! She who has a heavy purse in her pocket should be at ease. I mean, if she obtained it honestly.

Wil. Where can he loiter thus? It is four hours since he left us. Some misfortune must have happened to him.

Wife. Misfortune! How can that be? Why, it is broad day-light. Come, come! Cheer up! We'll have

a hearty meal at night. With all that money you may live comfortably for many a day. Oh, our Baron is a good, generous man.

Wil. How could he learn I was here?

Wife. That Heaven knows. Mr. Francis was so close————

Wil.—(Half aside.)—Has he discovered who I am? Oh, yes! Doubtless he knows me, or he would not have sent so much.

Wife. Don't say that. Our Baron is often charitable to strangers, too.

Re-enter COTTAGER, *scratching his Head.*

Wil.—(As soon as she sees him.)—Well?

Cot. I can discover nothing, if I stare till I am blind.

Wil. Merciful Heavens! What can this mean?

Cot. Our Pastor just now came round the corner.

Wil. Is he coming hither?

Cot. Who knows but he may? He generally gives us a call every three or four weeks.

Wife. Yes, he is very kind in his visits to all his parishioners. He talks to them about their farms, and so forth. When there are any quarrels and disputes, he settles them. When any one is in distress, he assists them. Do you remember, husband, when our lame neighbour Michael's cow died?

Cot. Ay, he sent him another—the best milch-cow he had. Heaven bless him for it!

Wife. Heaven bless him, say I too, with all my heart.

Enter PASTOR.

Pastor. God be with you, good people!

Cot. and Wife. Good day to you, Sir!

Cot. We are glad to see you.

Wife.—*(Wipes a chair with her apron.)*—Pray sit down.

Cot. It is a warm day. Shall I fetch you a draught of beer?

Wife. Or a couple of mellow pears?

Pastor. I thank you, good people, but I am not thirsty. You have a visitor, I perceive.

Cot. Yes, Sir, a poor woman, who is very weak and ill. I found her on the high-road.

Pastor. Heaven will reward you for assisting her.

Cot. That it has already done, Sir; for my wife and I never were more happy since we were married than we are to-day. Eh, Rachel? [*Offering his hand.*

Wife. Yes; that we are. [*They shake hands.*

Pastor.—*(To* Wilhelmina.*)*—Who are you, good woman?

Wil. I!—Alas!—*(In a whisper.)*—If we were alone——

Pastor.—*(To* Cottager.*)*—Be so kind, honest John, as to let me have a little private conversation with this good woman.

Cot. To be sure. Do you hear, Rachel? Come.

[*Exeunt* Cottager *and* Wife.

Pastor. Now, we are alone.

Wil. Before I confess to you who I am, and who I was, allow me to ask a few questions. Are you a native of this country?

Pastor. No. I was born in Franconia.

Wil. Were you acquainted with the venerable Pastor who was your predecessor?

Pastor. No.

Wil. You are totally ignorant, then, of my unhappy story, and mere accident has brought you hither?

Pastor. If in you I find the person whom I suspect, and whom I long have sought, your story is not quite unknown to me.

Wil. Whom you suspect, and whom you long have sought! Who commissioned you to do this?

Pastor. A man who sincerely sympathizes in your distresses.

Wil. Indeed! Oh, Sir, tell me quickly whom you suspect to have discovered in me.

Pastor. Wilhelmina Boetcher.

Wil. Yes. I am the unfortunate, deluded Wilhelmina Boetcher. And the man who sympathizes so sincerely in my distresses is—Baron Wildenhain; the man who robbed me of my virtue, murdered my father, and for twenty years has exposed me and his child to misery. All this he believes he can to-day atone for by a purse of gold.—(*Draws out the purse.*)—Whatever may be your intention in coming hither, Sir, whether it be to humble me, assist me, or send me beyond the borders, that the sight of me may not reproach the libertine, I have but one request to make. Take back this purse to him who sent it. Tell him my virtue was not sold for gold. Tell him my peace of mind cannot be bought with gold. Tell him my father's curse cannot be removed from me by gold. Say that Wilhelmina, poor, starving, and in a beggar's rags, still scorns to accept a favour from the hands of her seducer. He despised my heart—I despise his money. He trampled upon me—I trample upon his money.—(*Throws the purse on the earth with violence.*)—But he shall be left to revel as heretofore. The sight of me shall not be an interruption to his pleasures. As soon as I have in some degree recovered my strength, I will for ever quit this place; where the name of Wildenhain and the grave of my father bow me to the ground. Tell him, too, I knew

not that he was returned from Franconia, and was in this neighbourhood; for he may fancy I came hither in search of him. Oh, let him not fancy that!—*(Breathing with difficulty.)*—Now, Sir, you see that your presence, and the subject to which your visit led me, have exhausted my strength. I know not what I can say more. I know not, indeed, what more can be required of me by him who sent you.—*(With indignation.)*—But, yes: It may, perhaps, have occurred to his Lordship, that he once promised me marriage; that on his knees he called the Almighty to witness his vow, and pledged his honour to fulfil it. Ha! Ha! Ha! Tell him not to discompose himself on that account. I have long since forgotten it.

Pastor. I have allowed you to proceed without interruption, that I might learn your sentiments with respect to the Baron, and your general way of thinking. Unprepared, as you must have been, for a conversation with me, your full heart has overflowed, and I am convinced you have not used any dissimulation. I therefore rejoice to find you a noble woman, worthy of every reparation which a man of honour can make. I rejoice, too, in being able at once to remove an error, which, perhaps, has, in a great degree, caused the asperity of your expressions. Had the Baron known that the sick woman in this cottage was Wilhelmina Boetcher, and had he then, instead of all consolation, sent her this purse, he would have deserved—to have been murdered by his own son. But, no. This was not the case. Look at me. My profession demands confidence; but setting that aside, I would not utter a falsehood. A mere accident made you the object of his charity, which he imagined he was exercising towards one unknown to him.

Wil. How, Sir! would you convince me that this present was the effect of mere accident? To one unknown to him he might have sent a guilder, or a dollar, but not a purse of gold.

Pastor. I grant that appearances are against my assertion, but the accident was of a peculiar nature. Your son———

Wil. What of my son?

Pastor. Compose yourself. The Baron was affected by the way in which your son implored his charity.

Wil. Charity! Did he implore the Baron's charity?—His father's charity?

Pastor. Yes, but they did not know each other; and the mother, therefore, only received this present for the son's sake.

Wil. They did not know each other! Where is my son?

Pastor. At the castle.

Wil. And do they not yet know each other?

Pastor. They do; and I now appear here by command of the Baron, who sent me not to a sick woman, but to Wilhelmina Boetcher; not with money, but with a commission to do as my heart directed.

Wil. *Your* heart! Oh, Sir, do not lend that cruel man the sensations of *your* heart. But, yes—be it so. I will forget what I have endured on his account, if he will console me by his conduct towards Frederick. As a woman I will pardon him, if he will deserve a mother's thanks. How did he receive my boy?

Pastor. I left him in most violent agitation. It was the very moment of discovery, and nothing was resolved upon. But, doubtless, while we are now in conversation, the son is in his father's arms. I am convinced by the goodness of his heart——

Wil. The goodness of his heart again! Heavens! How can this man's heart be so suddenly altered? After having been for twenty years deaf to the voice of nature——

Pastor. You wrong him. Listen to me before you decide. Many an error seems, on a superficial view, most infamous; but did we know every circumstance which tended to excite it, every trifle which had an imperceptible effect in producing it, our opinion would be very different. Could we accompany the offender from step to step, instead of seeing, as in the present instance, only the first, the tenth, and twentieth, we should often pardon when we now condemn. Far be it from me to defend the Baron's conduct towards you, but surely I may maintain that a good man, by committing one bad action, does not, on that account, entirely forfeit his claim to the title of a good man. Where is the demigod, who can boast that his conscience is as pure as snow just fallen from the sky? If there be such a boaster, for Heaven's sake place no confidence in him; he is far more dangerous than a repentant sinner. Forgive me, if I appear too talkative; and let me now tell you, in few words, the story of the Baron since your separation. At that time he loved you most sincerely; and nothing but the dread of his rigid mother prevented the fulfilment of his promise. But he was summoned into the field, where he was dangerously wounded, and made a prisoner. For a year he was confined to his bed. He could not write, and received no intelligence of you. Thus did the impression of your image on his mind first become weaker. He had been conducted from the field of battle to a neighbouring castle, the owner of which was a worthy nobleman, who possessed a large fortune and a beautiful daughter. This lady became enamoured of the young officer,

and seldom left his couch. She attended on him with the affection of a sister, and shed many tears for his fate, which were not unobserved. Gratitude knit the band, which death rent asunder but a few months since. Thus the impression of your image was erased from his mind. He did not return to his native land, but purchased an estate in Franconia, to the cultivation of which he devoted his time. He became a husband and a father. None of the objects which surrounded him reminded him of you, and thus the recollection of you slumbered, till care, anxiety, and domestic discord, awoke it, and embittered his existence; for, when it was too late, he discovered in his wife a proud, imperious being, who had been spoilt in her infancy, who always thwarted him, always insisted on being right, and seemed only to have rescued him from death, in order to have the pleasure of tormenting him. At that time an accident led me to his house. He became attached to me, made me the instructor of his daughter, and soon after entrusted me with his confidence. Oh, how often has he pressed my hand in violent emotion to his heart, and said, "This woman revenges on me the wrongs of the innocent Wilhelmina." How often has he cursed all the wealth which his wife had brought him, and sighed for a less splendid but far happier lot in your arms! When, at length, the old Pastor of Wildenhain died, and he bestowed the benefice on me, the first expression which accompanied the gift was, "There, my friend, you will gain some tidings of my Wilhelmina." Every letter, which I afterwards received from him, contained this exclamation: "Still no account of my Wilhelmina!" I have those letters, and can let you see them. It was not in my power to discover where you dwelt. Fate had higher views respecting you, and prevented it until to-day.

Wil. Your description has excited in my breast emotions, which my heart acknowledges to be conviction. But how can this end? What will become of me?

Pastor. The Baron, I must own, has never told me what he meant to do in case he ever found you: but your sufferings demand reparation; and I know but one way in which this reparation can be made. Noble-minded woman, if your strength will allow it, accompany me. The road is good, and the distance short.

Wil. I accompany you! Appear before him in these rags!

Pastor. Why not?

Wil. Do I wish to reproach him?

Pastor. Exalted being! Come to my house. My sister shall supply you with clothes, and my carriage shall take us to the castle.

Wil. And shall I see my Frederick again?

Pastor. Rest assured you will.

Wil.—*(Rising.)*—Well! For his sake I will undergo the painful meeting. He is the only branch on which my hopes still blossom—all the rest are withered and destroyed. But where are the good Cottagers? I must take leave of them, and thank them.

Pastor.—*(Takes up the purse, and goes to the door.)*—Neighbour John!

Enter COTTAGER *and his* WIFE.

Cot. Here I am.

Wife. Well, you can stand again, I see, thank Heaven.

Pastor. Yes, good people. I shall take her with me. I can accommodate her better than you, though you have done what you could.

Cot. Why, to be sure, we can give her no more than we have, and that is but little.

Wife. But she is very welcome to that.

Pastor. You have acted like worthy people. There! take that as a reward for your kindness.—(*Offers the purse to the* Cottager, *who puts his hands together before him, twirls his thumbs, looks at the money, and shakes his head.*)—Well! won't you take it?—(*Offers it to his* Wife, *who plays with the string of her apron, looks askance at the money, and shakes her head.*)—What means this?

Cot. Sir, don't be offended, but we don't chuse to be paid for doing our duty.

Wife.—(*Looking towards Heaven.*)—You have often told us we should be paid hereafter.

Pastor.—(*Laying his hands on their shoulders, much affected.*)—You will. God bless you!

Wil. You will not refuse my thanks?

Cot. Say no more about the matter.

Wife. We assisted you with pleasure.

Wil. Farewell!—(*The* Cottager *and his* Wife *shake hands with her.*)

Cot. Good bye! Take care of yourself.

Wife. And when you come this way, let us see you.

(Wilhelmina *wipes her eyes, leans on the* Pastor's *arm, and supports herself on the other side with a stick.*)

Pastor. God be with you!

Cot.—(*Taking off his cap, and scraping.*)—Good day to you, Sir!

Wife. We are much obliged to you for this visit.

Both. And we hope we shall soon see you again.—(*They attend the* Pastor *and* Wilhelmina *to the door.*)

Cot.—*(Presenting his hand to his* Wife.*)*—Well, Rachel, how shall we sleep to night, think you?

Wife.—*(Shaking his hand.)*—Like tops.

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE, *an Apartment in the Castle.*

The BARON *is seated on a Sofa, exhausted by various Emotions.* FREDERICK *stands leaning over him, and pressing his Father's Hand between his own.*

Baron. So you have really seen some service? You know the smell of gunpowder? I'll stake my head against a turnip, that if you had been Frederick von Wildenhain, you would have been spoilt by your father and mother; but as Frederick Boetcher, you are become a fine spirited lad. This has, to be sure, cost you many an uneasy hour. Your juvenile days have not been very comfortable. Well! Well! You shall feel an alteration for the better, Frederick. I will legitimate you. Yes, my boy, I will openly acknowledge you as my only son and heir. What say you to this? Eh?

Fre. And my mother?

Baron. She shall be well provided for, too. Do you think your father is poor? Don't you know that Wildenhain is one of the best estates in the country? Yes, and but a mile from it lies Wellendorf, another neat spot; and in Franconia I obtained with my wife—*(Heaven rest her soul!)*—three large manors.

Fre. But my mother?

Baron. Well, I was just going to say that she may reside where she chuses. If she will not live in Franconia, why, she may remain at Wellendorf. There is a neat little house, neither too large, nor too small; an excellent garden; a charming prospect; in short, the place is a little paradise. She shall have every thing she wants, and a happy old age shall smooth the furrows which the misfortunes of youth have ploughed in her face.

Fre.—(Retreating a few steps.)—How!

Baron. Yes, and I'll tell you what, my boy. It is but a short distance from this castle. If, when we rise in a morning, we feel disposed to visit your mother, we need but order a couple of horses to be saddled, and in an hour we shall be with her.

Fre. Indeed! And what name is my mother to bear, when she lives there?

Baron.—(Embarrassed.)—How?

Fre. Is she to be considered as your housekeeper, or your mistress?

Baron. Pshaw! Pshaw!

Fre. I understand you. I will withdraw, my father, and give you time to consider well before you finally resolve on any thing. But one thing I must irrevocably swear by all that is dear and sacred to me: My fate is inseparable from that of my mother. Frederick von Wildenhain and Wilhelmina von Wildenhain; or Frederick Boetcher, and Wilhelmina Boetcher!

[*Exit.*

Baron. Zounds! What does he want? He surely does not expect me to marry his mother. No, no, young man; you must not dictate to your father how he is to act. I was flattering myself with the idea of having arranged every thing very comfortably, was as happy

as a king from having relieved my conscience of a heavy burden, was breathing more freely than for many years, when this boy throws a stone at my feet, and wants to make me stumble over it again. No, no. Friend conscience, I thank Heaven that I can address thee as a friend again. What thinkst thou to this? Thou art silent. But no. Methinks thou art still not completely satisfied.

Enter PASTOR.

Ha! my friend, you come most opportunely. My conscience and I are involved in a suit, which must be determined in the court where you preside.

Pastor. Your conscience is right.

Baron. Hold! Hold! You are deciding before you know the merits of the case. Your sentence is partial.

Pastor. No. Conscience is always right; for it never speaks until it is right.

Baron. Indeed! But I am as yet ignorant whether it speaks or is silent. On such occasions a divine has a quicker ear than a layman. Listen to me. I will state the case in few words.—*(Laying his hand on the* Pastor's *shoulder.)*—My friend, I have found my son, and a noble fellow he is—full of fire as a Frenchman, of pride as an Englishman, and of honour as a German.—That apart!—I mean to legitimate him. Am I not right?

Pastor. Perfectly.

Baron. And his mother shall enjoy peace and comfort for the remainder of her life. I mean to settle my Wellendorf estate upon her. There she may live, alter it according to her own taste, revive in the happiness of her son, and grow young again amidst the gambols of her grandchildren. Am I not right?

Pastor. You are not.

Baron.—*(Starting.)*—How!—What should I do, then?

Pastor. Marry her.

Baron. Yes. That is very likely, to be sure.

Pastor. Baron Wildenhain is a man who does nothing without a sufficient reason. I stand here as the advocate for your conscience, and expect you to produce your reasons, after which you shall hear mine.

Baron. Zounds! why, you would not wish me to marry a beggar?

Pastor.—*(After a pause.)*—Is that all you can advance?

Baron.—*(At a loss.)*—No—not exactly—I have other reasons—several other———

Pastor. May I beg you to mention them?

Baron.—*(Very much embarrassed.)*—I am a nobleman.

Pastor. Proceed.

Baron. The world will ridicule me.

Pastor. Proceed.

Baron. My relatives will shun me.

Pastor. Proceed.

Baron. And—and—*(very violently)*—Zounds! I can't proceed.

Pastor. Then it is my turn to speak on the subject; but, before I do this, allow me to ask a few questions. Did Welhelmina, by coquetry or levity of conduct, first raise in you a wish to seduce her?

Baron. No. She was always chaste and modest.

Pastor. Did it cost you any trouble to gain your point?

Baron. Yes.

Pastor. Did you ever promise her marriage?—*(The* Baron *hesitates. The* Pastor *says with great solemnity)*

—I repeat my question. Did you ever promise her marriage?

Baron. Yes.

Pastor. And summoned God to witness that promise?

Baron. Yes.

Pastor. You pledged your honour that you would fulfil this vow—did you not?

Baron.—(With impatience.)—Yes, yes.

Pastor. Well, my Lord, from your own confession it appears that the witness you called upon was God, who beheld you then, who beholds you now. The pledge you offered was your honour, which you must redeem, if you be a man of integrity. I now stand in your presence, impressed with the full dignity of my vocation. I shall speak to you as I would speak to the meanest of your peasants; for my duty commands it, and I will fulfil my duty, should I even thereby forfeit your esteem. If in the days of gay and thoughtless youth, (when a man lives, as it were, only to enjoy the present moment,) you seduced an innocent female, without considering what might be the consequence; and if, when more advanced in years, you repented your youthful indiscretion, and endeavoured to make every reparation in your power, you are still a respectable man. But if a licentious youth, by wicked snares, has plunged a guiltless being into misery; has destroyed the happiness and innocence of a female, to gratify a momentary passion; has, while intoxicated with his happiness, pledged his honour, and sacrificed his conscience to his brutal desires; can he imagine reparation may be made by a paltry handful of gold, which chance bestowed on him? Oh, such a wretch deserves—pardon my warmth, my Lord. It might injure a good cause, though it is on this occasion

very natural. Ye good old days of chivalry! you have taken with you all your virtues, your sense of honour, your respect for female delicacy, and have left us nothing but your pride and broils. The conquest of innocence is, in our degenerate days, an act of heroism, which the conqueror glories in, while the helpless victim of seduction curses the murderer of her honour, and, perhaps, projects the murder of her infant which is in her womb. Once more, my Lord, I say you must fulfil your promise. You ought to do it, if you were a prince; for a prince, though he may be released by the state from the fulfilment of his vows, will never be released by his conscience. Therefore, thank God that you are not a prince. Thank God that it is in your power to purchase at so cheap a rate the most valuable of all treasures—peace of mind. In resolving to marry Wilhelmina, you have not even any claim to merit; for this union will enhance your happiness. What a pity it is that it does not cost you any sacrifice, that your whole property is not dependant on it! Then might you have stept forth, and said, "I'll marry Wilhelmina. Do I not act nobly?" But now, when she brings you a dowry larger than any princess could bestow, your peace of mind, and an amiable son, now, you can do nothing but exclaim, "Friend, wish me joy; I'll marry Wilhelmina."

Baron.—(Who, during the Pastor's *address, has alternately walked up and down the room in most violent agitation, and stood with his eyes fixed on the earth—at one moment exhibiting marks of anger, at another of remorse, now approaches the* Pastor *with open arms, and presses him to his heart.)*—Friend, wish me joy. I'll marry Wilhelmina.

Pastor.—*(Returning his embrace.)*—I do wish you joy.

Baron. Where is she? You have seen her?

Pastor. She is in that room. That I might not excite curiosity, I conducted her thither through the garden.

Baron. Well, then you shall marry us this very day.

Pastor. That cannot be. The union must not take place so soon, and must not be so private. All your tenantry witnessed Wilhelmina's disgrace: they, therefore, ought to witness the restoration of her honour. On three successive Sundays, I will publish the banns. Do you agree to this?

Baron. With all my heart.

Pastor. We will then celebrate the nuptials; and the whole village will participate in your happiness. Do you agree to this?

Baron. Yes.

Pastor. Is the suit, then, at an end? Is your conscience silent?

Baron. Still as a mouse. I only wish the first interview was over. I feel as much ashamed of first meeting Wilhelmina's eye, as a thief when obliged to appear before the person whom he has defrauded.

Pastor. Be at ease. Wilhelmina's heart is the judge.

Baron. And (why should I not confess it?) prejudices resemble wounds, which, though as nearly healed as possible, smart when any alteration takes place in the weather. I—I am ashamed—of confessing all these circumstances—to my daughter—to the Count—to my servants. I wish it were over. I should not like to see Wilhelmina—I should not like to resign myself entirely to joy, till I have explained every thing to—Holla! Francis!

Enter a GAMEKEEPER.

Where are my daughter and the Count?

Game. In the dining-room, my Lord.

Baron. Tell them I shall be glad to see them here.

[*Exit* Gamekeeper.

Stay with me, my worthy friend, lest the Count's insipidity should put me out of humour. I will tell him clearly and briefly what my opinion is, and if his senses be not entirely destroyed by the follies of France, he will order his horses to be put to the carriage, and —he may then drive with all his boxes of *pommade* to the devil.

Enter AMELIA *and the* COUNT.

Count. Nous voila a vos ordres, mon Colonel. We have been enjoying a *promenade delicieuse*. Wildenhain is a paradise on earth, and possesses an *Eva*, who resembles the mother of mankind. Nothing is wanting to complete this garden of Eden, except an Adam, who, as we are told by *mythologie*, accepted with rapture the apple of death itself from her fair hand—and this Adam is found—yes, my Lord, this Adam is found.

Baron. Who is found? Frederick, but not Adam.

Count. Frederick! Who is he?

Baron. My son—my only son.

Count. Comment? Your son! *Mon pére* assured me you had no children except *Mademoiselle*.

Baron. Your *pére* could not know I had a son, because till within a few minutes I was myself ignorant of the circumstance.

Count. Vous parlez des enigmes.

Baron. In short, the young man who attacked us this morning in the field. You remember him, for you ran away from him quickly enough.

Count. I have a confused recollection of having seen him. But proceed.

Bar. Well, that very young man is my son.

Count. He your son! Impossible!

Baron. Yes, he—(*apart to the* Pastor)—I am really ashamed of confessing the truth even to that coxcomb.

Pastor. A man like you ashamed of such an animal as that!

Baron.—(*Aloud.*)—He is my natural son. But that is of little consequence; for in two or three weeks I shall marry his mother, and shall break any man's bones who ridicules me for it. Yes, Amelia, you may stare. The boy is your brother.

Amelia.——(*Delighted.*)——Are you joking, or serious?

Count. And who is his mother, *mon Colonel?* Is she of good extraction?

Baron. She is——(*To the* Pastor.)——Pray answer him.

Pastor. She is a beggar.

Count.—(*Smiling.*)—*Vous badinez.*

Pastor. If you particularly wish to know her name, it is Wilhelmina Boetcher.

Count. Boetcher! The family is quite unknown to me.

Baron. Very likely. She belongs to the family of honest people, and that is unfortunately a very small one.

Count. A *mesalliance then?*

Pastor. Generosity and integrity will be united with affection and fidelity. You may call that a *mesalliance* if you please.

Count. It really requires an *Œdipe* to unravel this mystery. *Un fils naturel? A la bonne heure, mon Colonel!* I have two natural children. There are *momens* in which instinct and a tempting girl are irresistible—In short, such things happen every day. *Mais, mon dieu!* What attention should be paid to such creatures? Let them learn some business or other, and they are provided for. Mine shall both be *friseurs.*

Baron. And mine shall be a nobleman, as well as heir to all the estates I possess.

Count. Me voila stupefait. Miss Amelia, I must plead in your behalf. You are on the point of being *ecrasée.*

Amelia. Don't trouble yourself, my Lord.

Count. La fille unique! L'unique heretiere!

Amelia. I shall still possess and inherit the affection of my father.

Baron. Good Amelia! Right, my dear girl! Come hither, and give me a kiss.—(Amelia *flies into his arms.*)—Count, you will oblige me by leaving us for a few moments. We may, perhaps, have a scene here, which will not suit your disposition.

Count. De tout mon cœur! We understand each other. It is *clair de lune,* and I hope you will therefore allow me to return this evening to town.

Baron. As you please.

Count. A dire vrai, mon Colonel; I did not come hither in search of a *voleur de grand chemin* for my brother-in law, or a *gueuse* for my mother-in-law.—(*Skipping away.*)—*Henri! Henri!* [*Exit.*

Baron.—(*Still holding* Amelia *in his arms.*)—I breathe more freely. Now a word with you, my dear Amelia.

Twenty years ago I basely seduced a poor girl, and gave life to a child, who till to-day has been a prey to poverty and distress. The circumstance has weighed on my heart like a rock of granite. You have often observed, that on a dreary evening, when I sat in my arm-chair with my pipe in my mouth, and my eye fixed on the floor, I did not attend to you, when you spoke to me, smiled at me, or caressed me. I was then overpowered by the accusations of conscience, and felt that all my riches, that even you, my child, could not restore to me the blissful sensations of an honest man. Thanks be to Heaven, those sensations are restored to me——the causes of their absence, my wife and son, are restored to me. This worthy man feels—(*pointing to the* Pastor)—and I feel—(*pointing to his heart*)—it is my duty to acknowledge them as my wife and son. What think you?

Amelia.—(*Caressing him.*)—Can my father ask?

Baron. Will the loss be no affliction to you, if your father's peace of mind be purchased with it?

Amelia. What loss?

Baron. You were my only child, and all my estates would——

Amelia.——(*Gently reproving him.*)——Hold, my father!

Baron. You lose some valuable manors.

Amelia. For which my brother's affection will requite me.

Baron. And mine.—(*Clasps her with fervour in his arms.*)

Pastor.—(*Turning away.*)—And why not mine?

Baron.—(*To the* Pastor.)—My friend, I am obliged to you for the conquest over one prejudice, to myself for the conquest over another. A man who, like you, is the friend and supporter of virtue, raises his profes-

sion to the highest pitch of human excellence—of human rank. If all your brethren resembled you, Christianity might be proud indeed. You are a noble *man*—I am but a *noble*man. If I be on the point of becoming more, I am obliged to you for the promotion. I owe you much. Amelia, will you pay the debt for me?

(Amelia *gazes for a moment at her father, in doubt how to understand his words. He releases her hand, after leading her towards the* Pastor, *into whose arms she immediately flies.*)

Pastor.—(*Astonished beyond all measure.*)—Heavens! my Lord!

Baron. Say not a word on the subject.

Amelia.—(*Kissing him.*)—Silence! I know you love me.——(*The* Pastor *releases himself from her embrace. Tears gush from his eyes. He attempts to speak, but is unable. He then approaches the* Baron, *seizes his hand, and is about to press it to his lips, when the* Baron *withdraws it, and clasps him in his arms.* Amelia *looks at them, and says*)—How happy do I feel!

Baron.——(*Releasing himself from the* Pastor.)——Zounds! I shall begin to shed tears. Let me endeavour to compose myself. A scene awaits me, which will affect my heart still more than this. Well, my dear son, in a few moments all will be at an end, and the last beams of the setting sun will smile upon the happiest beings in nature's wide extended empire. Where is Wilhelmina?

Pastor. I will bring her hither. [*Going*

Baron. Stop! How strange are my sensations! Let me have another moment—Let me compose myself.—

(*Walks to and fro, breathes with difficulty, and looks several times towards the room into which the* Pastor *said he had conducted* Wilhelmina.)——She will come from that room!—That was my mother's bed room!—Often have I seen her come from it. Often have I feasted on her fascinating smile. How shall I be able to endure her care-worn look? Frederick shall intercede in my behalf.—Where is he?—Holla!

Enter a SERVANT.

Where is my son?

Ser. In his chamber, my Lord.

Baron. Tell him he is wanted here.—(*To the* Pastor.)—Go, then. My heart throbs most violently. Go, and conduct her hither. [*Exit* Pastor.

(*The* Baron *looks towards the room, which the* Pastor *has entered, and all the muscles of his countenance are contracted.*)

Enter WILHELMINA, *led by the* PASTOR.

Baron.—(*Rushes into her arms. She sinks into his, and nearly swoons. He and the* Pastor *place her in a chair, and he kneels before her with his arm round her waist and her hand in his own.*)—Wilhelmina! Do you remember my voice?

Wil.—(*In a weak and tender tone.*)—Wildenhain!

Baron. Can you forgive me?

Wil. I can—I do.

Enter FREDERICK, *hastily.*

Fre. My mother's voice!—Ha!—Mother!—Father! —*(Throws himself on his knees at the other side of* Wilhelmina, *and bends affectionately over both. The* Pastor *gratefully raises his eyes towards Heaven, while* Amelia *reclining on his shoulder wipes her eyes. The curtain falls.)*

THE END.

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